DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 150 604 CS 203 924

AUTHOR Powers, Gerald, Ed.
TITLE Public Relations and Publicity: Dimensions and Perspectives.
INSTITUTION Publicity Club of Boston, Inc., Mass.
PUB DATE [73]
NOTE 148p.; Not available in hard copy due to marginal legibility of original document

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 Plus Postage. HC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Responsibility; Financial Policy; *Industrial Relations; Industry; *Information Dissemination; Interviews; News Reporting; *Organizational Communication; *Publicize; *Public Relations; State Government

ABSTRACT

The ten papers in this collection, which include articles and transcripts of panel discussions and speeches, deal with many aspects of public relations. Topics discussed include the need to improve the reputation of public relations; how to run a press room at a national convention; issues involved in serving as spokesperson for a state governor; financial public relations; the responsibility of American corporations to the public; the publicity function of public relations; an information campaign launched by the New England Electric System to inform the public about its environmental preservation program; techniques of interviewing; current developments in industrial public relations; and the need for public relations. Introductory materials discuss the history of the Publicity Club of Boston and the background of this publication. (GW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED150604

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND PUBLICITY: DIMENSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

Edited by

GERALD POWERS

Assistant Professor of Public Relations
Boston University
School of Public Communication

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Publicity Club of Boston, Inc.
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

CS203 924

Published by the Publicity Club of Boston, Inc.

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Club History..... i.

Club Officers..... ii.

Introduction..... iii.

Acknowledgments..... iv.

1. Public Relations for Public Relations..... 1

2. Running a Press Room at a National Convention..... 19

3. Tightrope Walking at the State House..... 39

4. A Preface to Financial Public Relations..... 47

5. The Conscience of a Corporation:
Facing the Performance of Excellence..... 55

6. Selling the Story -- Where, How, and If..... 66

7. New England Electric System -- A Good
Neighbor Policy..... 75

8. The Techniques of Interviewing..... 83

9. Industrial Public Relations..... 91

10. PR: Who Needs It?..... 127

CLUB HISTORY

In the fall of 1948, former Publicity Club President John J. Molloy, then Publicity Director for the Boston Chamber of Commerce, sat at lunch with Daisy Weichel, Publicity Director for the Hotel Touraine. John noted that the number of people in public relations and publicity was increasing in the Boston area. The two discussed the idea of forming an association of public relations and publicity practitioners. Subsequently six people met in the Board Room of the Boston Chamber and exchanged ideas about the formation of the Publicity Club of Boston.

Eleanor Collier of Boston University, the late Floyd Bell, and Marie Houlahan, who became the first woman President, helped to write the constitution and by-laws. Another "founding father" was the late Bill Cavanaugh of United Air Lines. Bill became the club's second President and is remembered annually by the club with its journalism scholarship award bearing Bill's name.

The formal organization of the club took place on February 1, 1949 in the Castillion Room of the Hotel Touraine. On March 15, 1949, twenty-nine people met in the Adams Room of the Hotel Touraine for the first meeting of the Publicity Club of Boston.

Officers were elected and by-laws adopted. Of those elected on that day, two are still active club members: John Molloy, elected President, and Siebert Fahey (now Wallace), Corresponding Secretary.

Weekly luncheons were held in the Adams Room and many excellent speakers addressed the newly-formed Club. Eventually meetings were held every two weeks, first at the Town House then at the Hotel Vendome, and now at Nick's.

Two of the Club's greatest achievements in its 22 year history are the Education Course and the Scholarship Fund. The Professional Publicity and Public Relations course began in January 1961 and has been held every winter since. Proceeds from the course go to the William H. Cavanaugh Memorial Scholarship Fund. Each year a deserving student in the communications field at Boston University, Northeastern University, Suffolk University, and Simmons College receives a scholarship stipend.

Although much growth and changes have occurred since the Publicity Club of Boston was founded 22 years ago, the purposes have remained the same and still stand as quoted in the original constitution:

1. To promote and encourage the professions of Publicity and Public Relations.

2. To create in Boston a lasting fraternity of persons engaged in the profession of Publicity and Public Relations and to provide a forum for the discussion of problems affecting them.

3. To promulgate a code of ethics, standards and fair practices under which its members operate.

PUBLICITY CLUB OFFICERS 1971-1972

PRESIDENT	Arnold T. Koch, Jr., vice president public relations services, Culver Advertising, Inc.
1st VICE PRESIDENT	Diane W. Glynn, public relations assistant, Wang Laboratories.
2nd VICE PRESIDENT	Gerald Powers, assistant professor of public relations, Boston University.
SECRETARY	Diane D. Meserve, public relations consultant
TREASURER	Nancy J. Caruso, associate professor and coordinator, Northeastern University.

HOW THIS BOOK CAME TO BE

In 1971 the Publicity Club of Boston observed the 10th anniversary of its annual education course. The club has given a practical course in public relations and publicity for both novices and professionals every winter since 1961. The course has enjoyed wide popularity and appeal and now has about 800 alumni, many of whom are club members and working in the communications profession.

Revenue realized from the education course goes to the Publicity Club's scholarship fund which grants four scholarships every year to undergraduate students in communication in the Greater Boston area.

As the 1971 course unfolded, the education committee (of which the editor was chairman), thought valuable material was being lost to posterity. Consequently, we taped a few sessions with the idea of putting the content of these panels into print. This idea met with enthusiastic support from club members and officers. We thought such a publication would be of real service to the public relations community.

Next, we thought we should publish some of the excellent talks given at regular meetings. Frequently, club members have missed a speech, only to hear excellent

feedback later. So, we decided to include two of the most stimulating talks given before the club this past year.

In addition, the editor contributed two articles based on personal experience and also solicited other contributions on areas of public relations that have assumed increasingly important roles in today's complex society----financial PR and the environment.

The first article on financial public relations is an overview of this highly specialized field. It strips away some of the glamor and also debunks the theory that all financial PR people do is promote higher price earnings ratios.

The other article shows what one major utility is doing for the environment. During a panel on the environment last spring, one of the speakers pleaded with industry critics to come out to the plants to see for themselves exactly what industry is doing. This idea hit close to home since far too many people on both sides of the ecological battle see the struggle as one of "them" and "us". Most questions have two sides and the editor decided to give one industry an opportunity to tell its story. All too often we read only about what industry is doing wrong and not enough about what industry is doing that's positive and helpful.

Readers of this book should find a wealth of solid, practical material which can be applied to their own situations in the communications field. We have tried to strike a balance between the practical and the theoretical. There is much thought-provoking material in articles such as "Public Relations for Public Relations", "The Conscience of a Corporation", "PR--Who Needs It"?, and "Tightrope Walking at the State House."

The Publicity Club of Boston hopes this book will be of service to the communications community of New England; perhaps subsequent publications will contain highlights of the club's activities for the year just past.

If nothing else the editor hopes this book proves in one more way that, indeed, the Publicity Club of Boston is alive and well and a stimulating, viable organization that welcomes all practitioners in the fields of public relations and publicity to its membership and meetings.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As editor I would like to publicly thank some of the people who made this book possible. First I'd like to thank Judi Kelley, immediate past president of the Publicity Club of Boston. She persuaded me to run the club's annual education course. Out of the course came the idea for this book, and when I first discussed the possibility of a publication like this, she was very positive and enthusiastic. I'd also like to thank Arnold Koch, current president of the club. He gave me a good deal of support and constructive criticism throughout the undertaking of this project. I also owe thanks to past and present treasurers of the club, Kim Watson and Nancy Caruso.

Many thanks are due to all the contributors to the book, including those who gave me copies of their speeches, the panelists, and the two gentlemen who wrote articles specifically for the book.

On the technical side of things, I'd like to thank Bob Hughes for help and advice on the layout, and Tom Muro who assisted in production.

As an educator I'm grateful for advice from former students, some of whom took fiendish delight in editing my copy the way I did when they sat in my writing classes

at the School of Public Communication.

Finally deep gratitude goes to my graduate assistant, James K. Baker. He helped me in every facet of this publication from beginning to end. Without his daily assistance this book would never have seen the light of day.

Gerald Powers

Assistant Professor of Public Relations

Boston University School of Public Communication
Boston, Mass. July 1971

PUBLIC RELATIONS FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS

The final panel of this year's annual education course sponsored by the Publicity Club of Boston was entitled "Public Relations for Public Relations." The committee that put the course together thought that public relations had a bad image with the general public and that many people in the field were too defensive about their work. The following remarks were made by a panel of four professional public relations people on May 12, 1971. Panelists were: Norman H. Bryden, director of public relations, U.S. Group, Honeywell Information Systems, Inc.; Frank Wylie, manager of public relations, U.S. Automotive Sales and Service, Chrysler Corporation; Geoffrey P. Stanwood, Development Office, Bowdoin College; and James Delay, director of public relations, Boston College.

BRYDEN

Public relations people are usually too busy practicing the art, sometimes in a frenetic fashion, to do much to improve its reputation, even though I'm sure

that's a commendable goal.

So maybe we can poke a bit into the swamp of misunderstanding that still surrounds the word "public relations" in some quarters.

I'd like to advance three propositions:

1. That public relations, by whatever title, is here to stay.

2. That its scope and practice is not very well understood, or revered, even by its practitioners.

3. That the reputation of public relations can be substantially improved, if the right people take on the job.

First, PR is here to stay, although the name may change. Estimates vary, but there are probably 80,000 or more individuals practicing PR in the U.S. today. Virtually all the largest corporations have PR staff or counsel. Government agencies abound in information officers----as the CBS Pentagon Report pointed out dramatically. Non-profit groups depend on PR help heavily, and so on.

The titles are changing, however, which may be a reflection of moss on the word public relations. The Federal government uses other titles like information officer or specialist.

Corporations are using "directors of public affairs" or "directors of communication". A recent Prentice-Hall Executive Report predicts that the function of public relations will be absorbed by integrated communication programs by 1980.

Second---PR is not very well understood or respected in some circles.

Professor Blaine McKeem of Colorado State University studied five major newspapers, including the New York Times, for 144 days. He found 48 mentions of public relations. Thirty-four, or 71 per cent, were neutral. Eleven, or 23 per cent, were unfavorable. A small sample, but interesting.

The New Yorker magazine, on April 17, in a story about Nixon used "public relations" in a derogatory way ten times in a two-column story.

I've culled a few choice pejoratives from publications in the last month: "flack", "press agentry", "PR snow job", "PR gimmick", "image merchants", "whitewash". Which reminds me of P. T. Barum, a press agent pioneer and master showman. He drew great crowds to see his pure white elephant, an enticing attraction, until someone discovered the "white elephant" was a

regular gray pachyderm with a layer of whitewash applied liberally between performances. Some critics would say PR men are lineal descendants.

Many groups, including employers, tend to equate "public relations" with "publicity". We all know better. Speaking of publicity, although some reporters and editors sneer, rightfully so, at newsless news releases, the media needs us as never before as an extension of their limited reporting resources.

Howard Stephenson estimates that 60 per cent of media word content is supplied by public relations people. Think about that. I suppose you could say that if the media had the people and financial resources to cover everything worth covering, publicity as a function would vanish, thereby putting a lot of nice competent people out of work. Also a lot of incompetent people, which would be helpful.

The third proposition, is that we can upgrade public relations. I'd like to offer a five-point package which I believe would do a lot to elevate the prestige of the field.

1. PR people should quit being defensive about their business. Ethically and competently practiced, it's an honorable and useful art. You should sell it that way to your employers, clients and friends. Be sure you understand it as such, yourself.

2. Support professionalism and professional organizations. I mean in a personal and organizational sense. You---and everyone above the level of flack---have an obligation to yourselves to practice the highest standards of public relations.

Lewis Lapham, chairman of the executive committee of Banker's Trust, said he expects certain qualities of his PR counsel. They are: management skills, knowledge of the client's business and objectives; current information about trends in society affecting business, and the developed ability to counsel top management. I'm sure he would add a strong sense of ethics.

Organizationally, you should belong to and support the Public Relations Society of America, and become accredited by the group. And bring to bear your skills on community organizations.

3. Everyone who calls himself or herself a PR professional should work toward a better understanding of PR

among key groups--starting with the media, employers, community groups, government, etc. Educate them.

4. PRSA itself must embark on a broad program to build credibility of public relations. Dr. Robert Carlson, PRSA's first paid president, says, "There seems to be general agreement that the Number One priority for my first year or two in office is to help organize and focus on and serve as a catalyst for that elusive thing called public relations for the public relations profession." How can PRSA do it? Through work by individual members and chapters, speeches, articles, etc., certainly, but through merchandising of the accreditation program, too. I also believe PRSA should do a better job of enforcing its own Code of Professional Standards. At least we can weed out the scoundrels within our own membership.

5. Individual practitioners should support school and college programs in public relations, both as practiced and as taught. Example: The Alumni Board of Boston University's School of Public Communication, has just voted to develop a full-scale PR program for the school itself. The University itself has a Public Affairs Council, set up by the trustees to advise on public relations for B.U. I'm pleased to be a member of both groups.

Why? Because it's a matter of self interest. It's my career, and yours. Who wants to be a member of a profession or business which may become tarnished by a variation of Gresham's Law; "Bad words tend to drive out good words."? After all, the word "villain" in the Middle Ages meant "farm laborer". Let's not allow a similar degradation of the phrase "public relations". We certainly can teach people what true public relations is and what it's value to American society really is.

Underlying all this, of course, is the thought that action---meaning ethical practice and teaching of public relations---is implicit and indispensable. Eisenhower once said, "Acta Non Verba." I'd say, action plus words will do much to improve respect for the practice of public relations.

STANWOOD

Kurt Vonnegut was recently quoted as saying, "I have made a study of careers in America and they last only 20 years. When you have done anything for 20 years, you are past your prime." And to a degree, I accept that thought. Not to the extent implied by

Vonnegut nor by extension to the thought that if you have been in PR for 20 years, you are past your prime.

It is possible that you can become more alert in your profession if you change your focal point within the field. When one has specialized in a specific business function for a considerable period of time, it is not unnatural that he might have to judge himself expert, capital E. Talents he has worked hard to acquire become second nature, it is automatic. His job can become too easy. In situation A, you push button B and you get result C. In that context it might be beneficial to carry your prime into another area of PR; not dropping the field, but carrying it into another area.

Despite the images elicited by the words "public relations", it is my guess that there is many a good PR man and he is essentially modest. He works diligently on his projects and is enormously pleased with a successful enterprise. But, if he is corporately inclined, he is apt to deprecate his part in success basically because he is already at work on the next program. He does not take the time to state,

"what a good boy am I", or to send memos left and right to insure his given and proper credit due. Perhaps in this corporate area there is one example of need of PR for PR. I except in this particular area, to a certain degree, the other PR professionals which are the consultant types, and agency groups and so on to whom the blowing of horns is quite essential.

The PR person working in the public domain is aware of the enormous frustration attendant on people stating publicly, "boy has your company got lousy PR." Such things occur in spite of your many efforts to develop work in the formulation of public employee or public relations policy. In this particular case who stands to protect the PP officer? Certainly not the chief executive officer who has rabbit ears concerning anything that happens in his company. He does not catch the place or the circumstance, only the "lousy PR".

Incidentally, your chief executive officer is also the nice chap who thinks that you have rewritten the accepted story. He believes that you have written the headline, set the type, misspelled his name

with the errors properly placed, so that the whole thing is completly out of initial context.

The accreditation of PRSA may be a form of PR for PR. Although, I personally think the goal of accreditation is a nice legalizing sound; the imprimatur of good faith with the presumption of truth in PR packaging. It's very professional sounding to the ear.

It is difficult to tell people what PR is all about. The average citizen is accustomed to tangibles; something he can see, touch, taste, or feel. How often you hear the question, "just what do you do in PR"? The practitioner often finds himself "but, but, butting", and waving his hands as if to describe a circular stair case in an attempt to project what it is he does do. Actually, much of what a PR man does is physical or hearable, or otherable. At the same time, a large percentage of his activity is under the surface with contacts. His contacts and associations are much a part of his effectiveness. He is a rover. That is the catch. That is where he himself may be able to use a little PR or publicity.

How does one measure PR effectiveness: by the

yardstick, tape, rule, by foot, or inch, or should we do it by the jigger, for that is the measure most considered as the PR man's best utilized tool.

There are many angles and postures taken by PR types. Basic is the corporate individual; I call him the general practitioner since he covers the field; publicity, legislation, speeches, financial, leaping around from pillar to post. However, when the corporate body is attacked by a special problem, the general practitioner turns to the specialist. In the case of PR, it may be an agency, but someone who has expertise directed to a specific area of PR activity. For example, financial PR, legislative, lobbying, media action, communication, etc. In this context, we have PR for PR. It also points out that there are many arms to the PR field. One can get an internship in a variety of specialities, all of them in one degree or another measurable activities. In effect, PR for PR.

WYLIE

Public relations is a process which involves communications in several different directions. It carries a company's, college's or labor union's message to the public.

But this corresponds only to about one third of the job. Public relations consists primarily of communications from the outside to within a company. Practitioners bring information, suggestions, and recommendations to management prior to the time that management must make a decision. The function is one of an early warning system, urging management to act rather than react.

"It must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carry out, or more doubtful of success, or more dangerous to handle than to initiate a new order of things."

That was written quite a few centuries ago by Machiavelli in a book called The Prince. It is quite applicable to public relations. The role of PR is not a hoping to bring about change, but a convincing of those who have the authority to make the changes that they should.

There are certain pitfalls which are common in PR. One is the assumption that PR has a specially ordained status. This is not true. PR along with other staff functions is in competition for funds and approval from management. PR's success depends on the quality of its people and the effort at which they apply their talents.

One important pitfall concerns people in Public Relations who will not become involved in any way with publicity.

They think it is a nasty word and that they are above all that. These people are far removed from the reality of the day. If they have a thought and they have not taken that idea and tried to sell it, tried to make someone believe that it is right, then, they have not tested their own skills.

You find a similar situation in titles such as "Public Affairs", indicating a very title-concious person who is much bigger than Public Relations or Publicity.

Other pitfalls of PR include a lack of proper research, poor writing, bad distribution, poor timing, lack of judgement, and the failure to react fast

enough to outside stimuli.

As a prerequisite to good PR, on the other hand, a very important asset is "guts". The effective practitioner must be willing to stand up and be counted. A good PR man must have skills to offer. Management is entitled to something above and beyond the soft claim of a PR "specialist," or "manager."

From time to time, you hear the PR man crying "management does not give me a big enough role, enough authority," and so forth. This is the greatest self-incrimination one will ever hear. If management does not give the PR man what he thinks is right, he should be somewhere else. If he says that they have not, and he is still there, he admits he does not have what it takes to be a good PR man.

What we are talking about is Public Relations for Public Relations. The best way to achieve this is by doing the job well and doing it better than it is being done today. This involves a greater level of professional effort, a more effective use of PR's body of knowledge, the constant, individual striving for higher standards.

What we should be involved in as public relations practitioners, it seems to me, is the communication of fact. Public misfacts, and non-truths, even when called public relations are a particularly grotesque misuse of our communicating abilities. So while we talk about "PR for PR" I hope we are not proposing propaganda for PR. And that we are not talking about convincing various publics that PR practitioners are better professionally than, in fact, they really are. What we ought to be talking about however, is what we as practitioners are really doing, and why we are doing it.

In a very basic way, if you are a practicing PR man, and you have a good story to sell, you're going to do all you can to sell it. But what do you do when your company is doing something badly? Do you lie about it, fake it, or do you try to convince people that it is not really that way? I think not. What we ought to do is say, "we have been doing something badly, so here's what we're doing to correct it." Public relations ought not to be the business of creating disingenuous impressions. As professionals, we should be trying to tell, as honestly as we can, the truth about whatever it is we are working for.

The practitioner must have something to contribute to the decision making process.

Public Relations must have a good batting record if it is to urge management into new areas with a reasonable degree of consistency. It has to increase its acceptance by management. And, at the same time, Public Relations must gain, maintain, and increase its acceptance by the press and the public.

DELAY

What is propaganda and what is communication is the basic problem for the individual working in public relations. And one gets the feeling that any discussion called "PR for PR" is really dealing with improving the way things look. But what is really important is not what things seem to be, but what they are.

Increasingly, communications has been used as a selling tool. We are sold political candidates, companies, people, policy, universities and products. In all these sales it seems that the salesmen have learned to manipulate by making things look better than they are---by not telling the truth, by faking it. We say we're improving an image-----but beyond image, of course, is reality.

As PR people, we sometimes fail to communicate because we think of communication in terms of words. It must be understood that words are only one medium of communication which is perhaps the least effective. Consider, for instance, how many foreign languages are spoken in the United States. Each has its own meaning and nuance. We come from different parts of the country and we speak in different accents and we use different words. Many of these words have different shades of meaning. We come from different economic backgrounds so we use words and actions in far different ways. For example, what is "rich"? How long is a "long way"? How deep is "deep"?

Always speak the language of the audience you are trying to reach. Communication is governed by the rule of the audience. That audience has the right, the means, and often, the inclination to change those rules.

In summary, Public Relations consists of becoming and being a provider of the predecision. Public Relations is defensive. It becomes offensive only in the absence of skills. For this reason, the PR man must bring management some skill which it wants, needs, and believes.

If the company, or whatever, is not good enough to bear the light of truth, then it certainly is not good enough to work for.

But if each of us refuses to use the lie as a public relations device, that is the best kind of public relations we can do for PR. If we expect to be believable, the best way to get there is to be truthful, and if PR has a bad image--an image of fakery, phoniness and distortion---that may be, to a large extent, because it has been earned.

RUNNING A PRESS ROOM AT A NATIONAL CONVENTION

by

Gerald Powers

Some day as a public relations practitioner you may be called upon to run a press room for a national convention of some group. Such an experience can be exhilarating, but exhausting. If you receive good coverage for the meeting, you'll look back upon your work with great satisfaction, although you will be putting in an 18-hour day. While on the job your feet will ache, you'll run miles each day, go to bed tired and wake up the same way. It's a good thing most national meetings only last three or four days, any longer and the press officer would be ready for a long stay in a sanitarium.

National organizations like trade unions, professional groups, and academic societies hold annual meetings in different cities each year. Every organization wants maximum press coverage for its meeting and here's where the person doing the press relations comes in.

Some of the more affluent organizations have their own press or public relations staff people, but many

such associations do not, and will hire a local professional to do the job on a free lance basis. Hiring a professional is the best thing. A person not used to dealing with the media and who does not understand their needs would be lost running the press facility at a national convention. Some years ago a psychology professor was arbitrarily assigned to the press room by his boss at a national gathering of psychologists. The man knew nothing about public relations and the results were unhappy for all parties concerned.

If a professional is hired to handle press relations, such a person will, in all probability, know the local media people, have good contacts, and because of knowledge of the host city, will be invaluable to the permanent staff of the sponsoring organization.

After you have been hired to handle press relations for the annual convention of the National Association of Broom Manufacturers, what is the next step? Get together with one or two people handling the local arrangements and go over the physical set up of the convention. Visit the hall and hotel where most of the programs will be taking place.

Most convention sites will have a designated press room. It is best to locate the press room close to the place where the staff actually running the convention will be located. You will find yourself having to be in constant touch with these people regarding decisions on equipment, security, food, etc. Having an office close to the staff of the sponsoring organization will save much running around.

If you have a choice for press facilities, check the schedule of events and try to locate near where most of the real action of the convention will be taking place, otherwise it may take far too much time to get reporters to important speeches and panels. Proximity to the action will save time, and remember, you'll never have enough time to do everything that should be done once the convention starts.

Next ask the local arrangements committee for authorization to hire press aides. You'll need about six. Students from local schools of communications usually fill the bill very well. Such students will have a little prior orientation to the media and their needs. You'll want students who are fast on their feet, can write a little, if needs be, can work long hours under pressure, and make a good appearance.

Now you have to get out a release on the convention. This will be an advance, giving the precise details on the dates and location of the convention and, perhaps, a mention of prominent people who may be addressing the gathering. This release should go to every major newspaper in the country plus the wires. Usually the sponsoring organization will have a media list, if not consult N.W. Ayer's Directory of Newspapers and Periodicals. Be sure to send the release to the appropriate editor of each newspaper (education, business, financial, science, medical, etc.).

If you have the time, contact the major local media personally. Visit the local daily papers and the news directors of the local radio and TV stations. Present these people with the release and a complete convention schedule and also tell them that you will be handling the press room and give them a phone number where they can reach you. Such a visit will be appreciated and you'll find the media people cordial.

Unless you have the President of the United States coming, let the local TV stations contact their national people. Don't bother calling David Brinkley or Walter Cronkite. If ABC, NBC, OR CBS wants to cover some of the convention they'll contact you soon enough.

The day before the convention opens, go to the press room bright and early and set up shop. This will be a day when you'll see few, if any, media representatives, but you will be handling the myriad of details that will facilitate a smoothly running press room. You will be constantly meeting with the local arrangements committee and the staff of the sponsoring organization. These people can be of immeasurable help to you.

You'll need at least four phone lines put in. More often than not, the instruments are in the press room, so it will be a matter of having them hooked up and then checking out the numbers and having these numbers known to key personnel.

Most convention sites have a sub-contractor who will rent you just about anything you need in the way of equipment. You will need a bulletin board (important for leaving messages and posting announcements), chairs, tables, typewriters, paper, pencils, and a large coffee urn. A good copying machine is also an absolute necessity. Make sure the machine is hooked up and running before the meetings begin and check to see that you have plenty of paper (reporters always want copies of speeches).

Be sure that you can contact the service department of the firm you rent the copying machine from. Such machines sometimes break down.

A word of caution on the use of the copying machine and other press room facilities. You have been hired as the official press officer for the convention and your basic duty is to serve the media and cater to their needs. Everything else is secondary. Sooner or later everyone ends up wandering into the press room in search of this or that. Well meaning people will want to use the copying machine to run off speeches or resumes (job hunters are always descending upon conventions like swarms of locusts). Be polite and firm, but keep that machine open for your use and the use of the media. Once you give in, you'll be swamped with requests. A firm "no" to most of those who drop in will do the trick. Have your aides politely query any one who comes into press headquarters and find out what their business is. At times you'll think you are running an information booth for the 10,000 people attending the convention. Run a tight ship and it will pay off. If a reporter can't get an open phone line in the press room because some delegate is trying to make dinner reservations, or he can't get to the copying

machine quickly to have a speech run off, because someone is having his resume done, you are going to have troubles. There are ways of tactfully shooing away the constant stream of visitors that inevitably ends up in the press room.

If you can latch on to an advance copy of a speech you will be one step ahead of the game, but don't depend on it. Many speakers simply won't bother to send you an advance copy. Once a speech has been presented, have copies run off and put on a special distribution table. This table should have the schedules, important speeches and reports neatly arranged so media representatives can pick up information easily.

Now your press room is ready and the convention gets into full swing the next morning. Open up your press room early. If the first session begins at 10 A.M., you'll find your room hopping about nine o'clock when about twenty reporters pile in. Have the media representatives sign a sheet indicating their names and affiliations. Have this list run off later in the day and readily available. Also have your aides make up press badges immediately. Such identification should allow the press to move freely and unchallenged

about the convention site. Reporters like to be highly selective in covering a convention and want freedom to roam. Once a reporter identifies himself as such he will usually have very little difficulty with the security forces. This first day it is best to have your aides lead the reporters to the particular panel or speech they wish to cover. This will necessitate having your aides familiarize themselves thoroughly with the layout of the convention site. They can do this the day before the convention starts.

Remember that the majority of people are disorganized, never on time, don't answer messages, won't call back, know nothing about how the media works, and could care less (academicians are notorious for this). The duties of the press officer are to keep things running smoothly, so leave nothing to chance or you'll be courting trouble. Presume nothing, expect the worst to happen (it usually does) and hope for the best. You will probably have to run yourself and your staff ragged setting up interviews, reaching people, arranging press conferences, etc. Just about the time you are ready to explode and scream at everyone, hold yourself in check and take a walk around the block. By the time you get back to the press room at least three new crises will have arisen and you'll have forgotten what it was that

made you so irritated 15 minutes earlier. At one time or another most of the problems of the entire convention end up in the press room. Delegates will wander in looking for an old friend from Boise, a room in a hotel, a tip on a good restaurant, a baby sitting service, and just about everything imaginable. Keep a sense of humor during all this and be polite.

If you can find the time, sit down with the people running the convention for a planning session before the meeting opens. It's far better to anticipate trouble rather than to have to react to something without a plan. In these days of protest and violence, one never knows what to expect, so leave nothing to chance. Go over security plans and anything else that needs to be covered at this meeting.

A year ago while the president of a national organization was delivering his annual report at a convention, he was interrupted by a rather strangely dressed man who strode up the aisle and said, "What are you doing"? The speaker looked up and replied "I'm trying to give the annual report."

The press officer for the convention just happened to be in the balcony. As the interruption took

place, a technician popped his head out from a console and said to the press officer, "Just give me the word and I'll cut all the microphones in the room." The press officer replied, "Hold it unless he tries to seize the stage, then cut." Happily the man was hooted off the floor by the delegates and things returned to normal. This could have been a sticky situation and it was pure luck that the press officer for the convention just happened to be there. There should always be a plan to deal with such disturbances. This is particularly true if a controversial figure is going to address the gathering.

If you don't have an emergency plan to put into effect when trouble hits, there's a danger of panic. Remember, it's far easier to prevent a fire than to put one out and it's also much better public relations to cope with a potentially dangerous situation if you've given thought to the matter than playing it by ear. Of course you can't anticipate everything and there'll always be the unexpected taking place, but be sure to have a course of action in case things don't go according to schedule (they rarely do).

Next we must consider the press conference. At the end of this article you'll find a check list for running a press conference.

Everything listed may not be apropos to your particular situation but, to quote Gilbert and Sullivan, "Let the punishment fit the crime."

First don't call press conferences indiscriminately. Too many media people are run ragged by attending press conferences which are far from newsworthy. Once you've called a conference, try to find a comfortable room in which to hold it. Remember the TV people have lots of equipment and their lights generate heat. Most convention sites will have a couple of rooms with chairs and sofas, etc., to allow for the comfort of everyone involved.

NEVER call a press conference without first checking with the principal figure. Not to do so would be presumptuous and plain bad manners. You would also look foolish if Ambassador X simply declined to meet the press after you had called a press conference of your own volition.

Always ask any of the big names attending the convention if they will be available to the media after their talk. Once Ambassador X says yes, then roll into action.

Post a notice on your press room bulletin board that Ambassador X will meet with the media representatives

at a specific time and location immediately following his panel or address. This easily eliminates the problem of the man being mobbed right after his talk. After posting the conference, call the city desks of the local papers and news desks of the local TV and radio stations.

Be sure to check Ambassador X's timetable to see how long he can spend with the press. Important people usually run on tight schedules; planes have to be caught, and they have other engagements to keep. Thirty minutes is usually the accepted maximum amount of time for a press conference. If Ambassador X has to leave early to catch a plane, work out a signal with him whereby you'll end the conference on schedule without unpleasantness.

Station one of your aides in the room where Ambassador X is speaking. Have another aide check out a route where the ambassador can get to the site of the conference quickly. Go over the route a few times while the ambassador is speaking. Back stairs, fire escapes, passages marked "Employees only" usually provide the best way of getting a VIP to a press conference. Also take into consideration the health and age of the VIP. If Ambassador X has a physical disability most places will have back elevators and wheel chairs, etc. available.

What do you do if several VIPs are talking simultaneously at separate luncheons or panels and the press wants to talk to all of them? Since no one has yet devised a way of being two places at once, don't schedule simultaneous press conferences. This could result in chaos. If Ambassador X agrees to meet with the media at 1:30, see if you can schedule Mr. Y for 2 pm in the same room. Once the TV people have set up their equipment in one room, it would be foolish to ask them to move it to another room. Of course, doing as suggested above, all hinges on the schedule of Mr. Y and the deadline limitations of the media. If Mr. Y agrees to go on at 2 pm, then have one of your press aides stick to him like fly paper until the time for the press conference. Representatives of the media don't like to cool their heels while press aides are looking for Mr. Y, who is somewhere in a vast convention hall.

I have discussed only the major points of the literally thousands of little details that a press officer at a national convention has to be concerned with. The press officer will probably do very little writing, but he will have to be everywhere at once. He will be moving at a break neck speed and putting out "fires" all over the convention.

His main function, however, is to keep the media people happy and cater to their needs. On occasion the press officer will have to run interference between the press and the convention participants. Often the media can be abrasive and as press officer you'll be caught in some sticky situations which will require a cool head and even temper. A good press officer will be constantly smoothing ruffled feathers. You must remind yourself that your basic obligations are to the press and the sponsoring organizations above all else. The sponsoring group wants maximum coverage on their proceedings and your job is to assist in the achievement of this goal.

The waning hours of a convention are akin to a wake. Meetings build up to a big crescendo, then people hurriedly scatter and the convention hall becomes silent and gloomy. It is important to keep the press room open for a few hours after the final sessions. Reporters will want to phone in wrap-up stories and sometimes you'll have to phone in last minute statistics to the reporters who are already back at their offices writing their final stories.

You'll have to see that all the rented equipment in the press room is picked up and sign the bills which

will be forwarded to the national office of the sponsoring organization. Make sure your aides have been properly paid and, finally, leave the press room clean. Chances are that tomorrow morning some one else will be setting up press facilities for another convention.

The basic thing to remember is to leave nothing to chance. If the experience sounds exhausting it is. Such work is not for a shy intorverted person, however, the experience can be gratifying and fun too. Everyone in the field of public relations should have the opportunity to act as press officer at a national convention at least once. I don't think the nervous system could take this type of work more than two or three times a year.

Happy convention!

NEWS CONFERENCE CHECKLIST

Before calling the conference, be sure you have a genuine news story and that there is no other appropriate way to get it to the press.

If you decide the conference is justified, the attached checklist will be useful in arranging it.

Remember that afternoon papers are at work generally by 6:30 or 7:00 a.m., and morning papers by 10:00 or 10:30 a.m. If possible, therefore, the conference should be scheduled for about 11:00 a.m., or 2:00-2:30 p.m., preferably on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday, when reporters are usually more readily available to attend.

Be sure to invite all appropriate media, and pay attention to the special needs of television, the technical and trade press, and photo assignment editors.

Try to anticipate any problems that might arise and be prepared to deal with them. The purpose of this checklist is to help you to do so.

NOTE: Some of the ideas contained on this checklist may not be appropriate for every press conference. However, before holding a press conference it would be a good idea to run over this list and tailor the ideas to fit the needs of your specific conference.

PRELIMINARY

Check principal's calendar for best date and time.

Compile list of prospective media attending.

- Print media, including photo assignment editors.
- TV and radio assignment editors.
- Separate conference for technical press?

Invitations to reporters: mail? phone?

Notify photo assignment editors.

Notify TV and radio assignment editors.

Have event listed on city wires' calendars.

Compile information on interests of reporters invited.

Get photographer: outside? staff back-up?

Assign employee to supervise physical arrangements of news conference.

Develop anticipated questions and suggested answers.

BRIEFING THE PRINCIPAL

Brief the principal on media attending, interests of individual reporters, and format of conference.

Determine who should be available at conference to assist principal in responding to detailed questions.

Hold practice session with prepared Q and A's.

PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENTS

Check out room size, accoustics, accessibility, electrical outlets, PA system if any.

Reserve room.

Prepare diagram of room.

Inspect physical set-up. tables, chairs, podium, etc.

Have electrician on hand.

Have extra chairs available.

Reserve some seats?

Pencils, paper, typewriters, telephones, coatracks?

Charts, blackboard, easel, projector?

Tape recorder and back-up machine, extra tapes, batteries.

Arrange for stenographer?

Signs showing way to conference, restrooms, phones. Where to set up signs.

OTHER ARRANGEMENTS

Notify guards.

Provide escorts and guides at entrance and parking lot?

Provide parking for reporters, TV and radio reps.

RELEASES, HANDOUTS

Opening statement.

Write press releases. Press kits?

Photos?

Give advance copies to principal and top staff.

THE CONFERENCE

Recheck immediately before conference to make sure tape recorder is working.

Record names at door.

Distribute releases, etc.

Man the doors.

Monitor tape recorder.

Introduction: establish ground rules re attribution.

Q & A period.

Formal close.

FOLLOW-UP

Send releases to media not attending.

Transcribe tapes, if any and if necessary.

Stimulate follow-up interviews?

Monitor wire services, TV and radio. Order transcripts if any.

Send clippings to principal and top staff.

Prepare and review file on conference.

* The editor is indebted to the Public Information Division of the Internal Revenue Service for this checklist.

TIGHTROPE WALKING AT THE STATE HOUSE

by

Jack Flannery, assistant to Francis W. Sargent,
Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

The following remarks were delivered at a Publicity Club luncheon on May 12, 1971 (Ed.).

My title is Assistant to the Governor....a title for all seasons. It works well based on its premise: that since I was not precisely to be a press secretary ....and not precisely a speech-writer and advisor---- better that I not be titled precisely any of those things and then I could be any or all as the occasion required. So, the title----a construction of controlled imprecision.

I write speeches. I speak for the Governor------ meaning not that I deliver his speeches, but rather that I serve as his spokesman, in his stead. I'm his spokesman to news media in the State House, across the state, and, increasingly, as his views are of interest elsewhere, across the country.

In addition, and somewhat on the side, as part of dealing with the media in an electronic age, I have become a sort of amateur media-advisor, picking up and passing on such arcane knowledge as how to be sure you're speaking on mike, where the key light is located in a television studio, and why video tape is better than film, if you can have your choice.

I'm assuming the role of general advisor---- which is one part wailing wall, one part sounding board, one part commentator---has less specific interest than the other roles I've mentioned, so I'm planning to talk about the press-media writing role. I'd like to say what I do by taking first the role that is easiest to explain....writing speeches. There's nothing very different in writing them for the president of a company than for a governor of a commonwealth, I suspect. The difference comes in the style of the person involved. For Frank Sargent the style is one of clarity and directness---and often that is the most difficult style to bring off in writing, because speeches on insurance and on welfare and on taxes don't lend themselves to simplicity.

Often, the job is to take drafts written by experts and translate them into English and then into Sargentese.

The two are usually compatible, so it works out. The problem comes not in the writing, but in the understanding of the original draft. I'm neither an insurance expert nor a lawyer, but the first draft of the Governor's recent salvo against the insurance industry was done by two men who are both. By the time I was able to understand deductibles and property-damage-no-fault as distinct from personal injury no fault, I was too exhausted to write it and I was cursing the invention of both insurance and of the motor vehicle. And that was Monday. Tuesday, there was a tax message and Thursday a reorganization speech. I've been flatteringly called the staff generalist. In fact, I'm the staff superficialist---knowing just enough about half a dozen subjects to make sense of them without knowing enough to get into trouble with experts.

The next easiest role to explain is media advisor. Since no one is quite sure what that means, it is also an easy role to perform. You tell your man which end of the camera to look into, which end of the microphone is up.

One can make a fetish of this business, though---- and, I suppose indeed, a career of it, by becoming learned on the effect of an incandescent filler light on a paunchy face, or by making a great mystery out of technical mumbo-jumbo that really doesn't matter to anyone but the television technician who's going to do it his way anyway. My function as media advisor to the Governor often as not boils down to saying, "Governor, you'll sit there and the guy interviewing you will sit there---and you really should get that suit pressed pretty soon." I oversimplify, but not much. If you worry much beyond the matters I've mentioned, if you start wondering whether the back-lighting is shading your hero's hair to grayer gray than is natural, if you start worrying that you'll lose the 21-year-old vote as a result----well, you begin to go mad at a faster pace.

I guess the most difficult role is that of spokesman for the Governor----most difficult because most vulnerable to error, most dangerous in terms of the amount of trouble you can get into.

My job would be more difficult if I worked for a devious man; being spokesman for someone who talks out of both sides of his mouth must be terribly hard work.

Plain talk is the Governor's style, and since that happens also to be the best method of dealing with the press, my life is easier as his stand-in. Even when I have managed to put my foot in his mouth in some statement to the press, the most I'll hear about it will be, "I was interested to read what I said in the paper this morning. Is it all right with you if I don't agree?"

All of which implies that the key to any press relations-public relations work is the trust of your boss or client, access to him---and the total knowledge of what is really going on. Not what you're supposed to say is going on, but what is going on. Amazing to me is the number of people in politics and/or government who don't understand that, who think they can spoon-feed their spokesman just what they want to see in print, and that by some magic trick he performs, it will all come out just fine in the end. You can usually tell such Neanderthals by the briefness of their presence on the public scene. Show me a public official whose press man has to make an appointment to see him and I'll show you a certain loser (sooner or later).

And spare us all from the boss or client who cons his spokesman, who decides the spokesman isn't important enough to know the whole story, and should be told only enough to make the simple point desired. There are individuals pompous enough to believe that if they tell you only what you are supposed to say--not necessarily the truth--that will be enough for you to do wonders.

In a situation like that---and I've never been there, mercifully---it seems to me that there are only two courses open to anyone---change your job or change (by which, I mean) educate your boss.

I'm convinced there is one fundamental in this business. It goes by several names---candor, straightforwardness, honesty---whatever it's called, it comes down to this: telling the truth.

The name of the game in press and public relations is the telling of truth. Nothing is easier to tell; nothing is easier to live with; and, believe it or not, nothing is wiser politically---not just because the truth is virtuous, but as a practical matter, if you lie, sooner or later you'll get caught, and you're in ten times more trouble than if you told the truth at the outset.

Lie once to the press and get caught---and you'd better go back to heavy-lifting, or whatever else you used to do, because you are henceforth in the wrong line of work, forever.

I know there are clients and individuals who think that philosophy is schoolboyish, that the name of the game really is subterfuge and illusion and even deception. They will learn the hard way---and, I say again, if you can't change them, change jobs or you'll go down in flames with them.

I don't mean to lecture---but I've learned so conclusively that what I'm saying is so that I just have to stress it. The trust of the press is essential to a man or woman who deals with the press. Without it, you are impotent---and worse, a downright handicap to your boss. And, implicit in trust by the press is trust of the press. Again, if you---or your employer---lack that commodity, you're in trouble.

Maybe the most dangerous delusion in my business is the "they're out to get us" school of non-thought regarding press relations. Press paranoia afflicts some of the savviest political---and I suppose business leaders around.

It comes of ignorance of the function of the press and the kind of arrogance that assumes reporters are just dopes who couldn't get better jobs.

The press is not out to get anybody. Like a lot of us they just want to get the job done and go home---make the next edition, be on the air for the next newscast, and then go have a beer.

Nor is the press comprised of a lot of boobs who wish they could get a real job somewhere. More often than not, they're sharper than the people they are covering and they have an alarm system that goes off at the first sign of a snow job.

Which brings me back to the main point: if there's a secret of success in this line of work, it's this: say what you have to say straight----it's better, it's easier, and, long run, it works. And, finally, this postscript I lately read and found appropriate: "Say nothing that does not improve on silence."

A PREFACE TO FINANCIAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

by

H. O. Martin and Gary A. Kraut

H. O. Martin has been on Wall Street and in financial public relations for twenty years. Gary A. Kraut was director of communications for a major New York Stock Exchange member firm before forming his own financial public relations company in 1969. Mr. Kraut is president and Mr. Martin is an associate of G. A. Kraut Company, Inc., New York City.

Among the most sophisticated and demanding public relations specialities, financial PR has a particular niche. It probably grew faster than any other PR specialty during the past decade. It may be the only area of public relations that operates within what PR texts term "a distinct body of knowledge". It has already fostered specialities within itself and is about to turn out a second generation of practitioners. And with all this, it is one of the least understood and most overestimated of public relations functions.

Learning about financial public relations from the printed page is a bit like learning about golf from a paperback. You have to try your hand to really understand the problems and solutions.

Nevertheless, there's nothing mystical about the specialty, and a quick overview can hopefully give you a good idea of what the practice is all about.

Strictly speaking, financial public relations covers all aspects of a company's activities which have a bearing on its reputation in the financial community. It also concerns itself with the financial aspects of a company's activities, providing lines of communication between the company and the various publics which are particularly interested in the finances of the company: financial analysts, stock brokers, business writers and, of course, the shareholders.

What financial public relations professionals do is nothing more than develop and execute a program designed to gain and enhance acceptance of a publicly-owned company by the financial community, promote confidence in the future of the company on the part of shareholders and provide a continuing contact between the financial publics and the company management.

In the past, financial public relations was so new a field that anyone who could say "subordinated convertible debenture" was considered an expert. Today, that is past. There is a growing sophistication toward financial public relations and PR professionals must develop equal sophistication. One by-product of this changing attitude is the development of the small specialty agency in the financial field, staffed or serviced by specialists in virtually every phase of both financial relations and financial operations. Tax shelter investment programs, for example, are becoming more and more popular. How can they best be presented to the financial community and the investment public? If the PR man doesn't understand some of the financial logic behind tax shelter investments, he can't do the job. Finance is an international operation, with money flowing from one country to another in search of attractive investment. A practitioner should have some understanding of various overseas investment possibilities such as Eurodollars.

Equally important, the practitioner should be aware at all times of his company's operations, its markets, its relations with its customers, suppliers, competitors.

Before examining a financial public relations program, it might be well to define some of the goals which such a program should achieve. First, a good program should develop a generally favorable impression of the company. This impression is not based only on performance, but on how well the company communicates with the financial community. Is there a steady flow of news so that the company becomes familiar and some continuity is created? Is bad news disseminated as freely as good news? Are "straight" answers given to questions? These are only part of the elements which play a part in developing a reputation.

Once this goal is attained, some of the other goals are easier. A good financial public relations program facilitates access to capital markets. It helps brokerage houses and investment bankers maintain an active market in the company's shares. Financial PR provides feedback from the financial community to the company as well as guidance on relevant financial matters, like stock splits, dividend policy changes, mergers and acquisitions.

While the financial publicist will never replace the banker, lawyer or accountant, he works closely with them, and offers advice from a broader background and

from wider experience. Many of the best financial PR professionals have worked not only in journalism, but in the banking and securities fields and have a thoroughly professional knowledge of finance. More and more, financial publicists are providing liaison between companies and the investment community, helping to secure capital, and to develop as well as maintain the investment banking relationship.

All of these objectives should be met by a professional financial relations program. Some of the components of such a program include:

1. Arranging and conducting meetings between financial analysts, brokers, institutions and stockholders and company management. This is normally an ongoing program, focused in New York, with frequent visits to other cities whose financial communities are important to the company. The financial public relations expert should not only be able to comprehend the in-depth financial dialogue that will take place, but should know which analysts, and which brokers from which investment houses to invite in every city.

2. The prompt and proper dissemination of corporate news is one of the more sensitive financial public relations responsibilities.

The practitioner should have the newsman's ability to present the story, and a lawyer-like familiarity with the securities laws concerning what can and cannot be said. Perhaps the most frequent releases concern corporate earnings, dividend declarations, merger or acquisition activities, new directors or officers and any other development that could even remotely effect the way in which the investing public views the value of the stock. It's always best to clear these releases through corporate counsel before distributing them.

3. One of the more important assignments is the annual report. Companies devote countless executive hours and attach special weight to this critical document. It's usually written and produced by the financial public relations practitioner. Other shareholder communications are the quarterly reports to stockholders, post-meeting reports and sometimes, newsletters.

The financial PR man should also be able to write in-depth company research reports, assist in proxy fights and tender offers, prepare the president's speeches to financial audiences, and set up the annual and special shareholder meetings.

What equipment should a financial PR practitioner bring to this rather formidable assignment? First of all, he should have the normal qualities of any good publicist. He should be able to write effectively, be aware of relationships in society, be reasonably active and curious with some imagination.

But in addition, financial PR requires a knowledge of economics and finance and an understanding of the workings of the securities markets. The practitioner should have some familiarity with accounting and balance sheets. This is vital if he is to understand the significance of the information he is transmitting.

A working knowledge of SEC regulations, as well as those regulations governing the major exchanges is required. The rules regarding disclosure and the "silent period" are things the financial publicist should know thoroughly.

Finally, and this is a critical factor, the financial PR professional must have complete integrity. He is privy to much confidential information and is considered an "insider" in terms of what he can do or not do with this information.

He should also be aware that financial public relations is a part of a total, long-range program, essentially a marketing activity, and one of a number of elements in an overall communications program.

Financial public relations is a highly specialized function. Success in this area depends not only on the basic traits common to all good PR professionals, but a thorough, growing knowledge of the dynamic world of finance. There is no longer room for the superficial PR man who tries to "fake" expertise by using a few "buzz" words.

It is a critical area for a company, requiring the utmost in professional and technical ability from the financial public relations professional. Its growth will continue, and so will the fascination of those who get deeper and deeper into its practice.

"THE CONSCIENCE OF A CORPORATION FACING
THE PERFORMANCE OF EXCELLENCE"

by

Walter S. Taylor

Walter S. Taylor is president of Lake Keuka Wine Co., Hammondsport, N.Y. He made these remarks at a Publicity Club luncheon on June 2, 1971. (Ed.).

THE CONSCIENCE OF A CORPORATION

The corporation in America has a responsibility to the public which permits it to exist. A corporation is a business, and it exists for profit; but its undeniable duty to the people in its market is to strive for quality in product, honesty in marketing, responsibility to social and environmental improvement, and integrity towards itself and the public.

A corporation exists to provide the public with material goods. But it must also be a vehicle of progressive and constructive ideas. A product is an extension of a person's soul; therefore, the product reflects the integrity of the people who produce it. A low quality product lowers the quality of the people who work in the company.

If the American corporation produces low quality products, fraudulent in labelling, deceptive in packaging, advertising, and marketing, and reflecting cheap methods of production, we approach decline in the quality of our living.

With conglomerates and other firms that control our companies in a horizontal plane, how can the consumer protect himself? The directors are so far away and often unknown that the problem could remain hidden and unsolved for a long time.

Can a corporation in all reality be completely honest with itself and its consumers? There is only one answer: it absolutely must be. The management and directors must take every step possible toward achieving this end. It is a matter of financial stability, a matter of reputation, and the only way to preserve the individuality and creativity of those who work within the company.

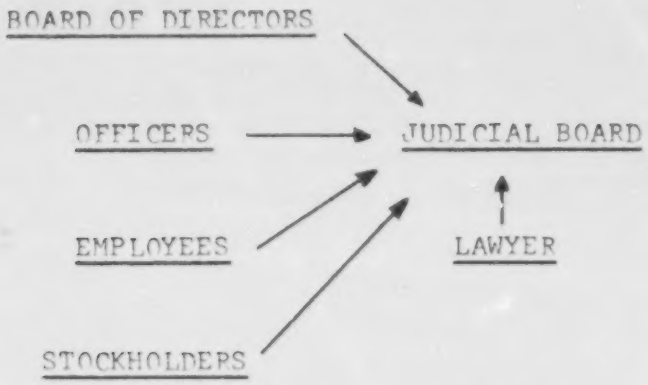
How can we, as responsible leaders of the world's most profitable business nation maintain high standards within our industries? The recent crusades of such groups as Nader's Raiders magnify the importance of this question.

But rather than being attacked from the outside, the corporation should undertake an extensive self-evaluation and assessment of its methods, its products, and its goals. We are the experts on our company and its products; it is we who should start the crusade for improvement.

We should be able to ask ourselves several probing questions, such as:

1. Is the profit motive our overriding goal?
2. Do we truly love what we are doing? Do we know the business firsthand, through each step?
3. Is our corporation honest? With each other, and with the public?
4. Do we feel responsible to the public that chartered us?
5. Do we produce the highest quality product possible? Is our labelling and packaging accurate and truthful? Is our marketing honest and straightforward?
6. Are we constantly thinking of ways to progress? Are we developing channels of communication within the industry, with ourselves, our associates, and with the government and the public?

These are only six of the many areas we should consider in evaluating ourselves as an industry.



The Judicial Board would consist of five independent members:

1. A Director, who is actively involved in the company.
2. An Officer of the Company, who is knowledgeable in every phase of the company.
3. An Employee, neither a director, or an officer.
4. A Stockholder, neither a director, employee or officer.
5. A Lawyer, who is experienced in corporate law.

Each merber would serve for three-year terms, elected by the group he represents, nominated and approved by 3/4 vote of the body. The Lawyer would be appointed by the Governor of the State. Any issues brought before the Judicial Board would be voted upon and decided by a majority rule, and all decisions

would be published and available to anyone concerned.

The value of such a Judicial Board is that it would act as a conscience for the corporation. Matters of dispute on management policy and decisions, employee relations, new products and marketing approaches could be discussed freely and decided in a democratic process.

New ideas and new problems could be aired frequently between all phases of the company. Not only does the company have a conscience control factor; it has an effective channel of communication. Such a system is comparable to the Judicial Checks and Balances in the Federal Government, and it would distribute power in the same way.

This "conscience" also serves to strengthen liaison with the community, the rest of the industry, the consumer, the government and the general public.

It would also result in greater honesty in the corporation because all problems, difficulties, and progress would be revealed and out in the open. It would demand that all members of the corporation assume their responsibilities to the company, to themselves, and to the public. It would generate a more complete involvement from corporate members.

The quality of the product is a company's greatest sales tool; it is the greatest truth a corporation can have, and sell.

The major part of the corporate identity lies in the direction of its management. We must establish ways to educate ourselves to a new awareness of our goals and the methods to attain them. The following suggestions are ways in which we can begin to overhaul and examine our values in relation to the honesty, quality and integrity of the products we produce.

A SYSTEM OF CHECKS AND BALANCES

A suggestion is to establish a system of checks and balances within the corporation: A Corporate Conscience. As a step toward this self-awareness, we could create a Judicial Board composed of all major departments of the company.

RESPONSIBILITY ON THE EXECUTIVE LEVEL

A second suggestion in constructing the corporate conscience would be to set up "T" groups between company executives and a qualified professional. These sensitivity sessions would be critical, high pressured learning situations where executives of a company analyze and criticize themselves and each other. In revealing the weaknesses and strengths of each executive in the company, the "T" groups would prove valuable in directing the movement toward greater corporate and personal honesty.

Along these lines, a special task force could be established by the President of the United States to examine the social and environmental responsibilities of executives. The core of executives would undergo a three-month training session with government officials and experts in the field, whose job it would be to inform and educate them on the needs of the nation as they relate to specific industries. If the efficiency and talents of executives could be applied to the social and environmental problems of the nation, the people would derive a direct benefit from industry.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

A third major suggestion in creating a corporate conscience would be to specify that the members of the Board of Directors devote their efforts and support to only one corporation. This eliminates interlocking directorates and the conflict of vested interests which can destroy the effectiveness of corporate Boards of Directors.

Directors should be totally involved with the company, and not diffuse their time and energy over a wide number of unrelated, or conflicitng interests. This ruling would also eliminate the token directorships of uninterested, financially prominent people who in reality could not care less about the companies they represent. A Director should not be a stagnant status symbol, but an active, productive member of the corporation.

RESPONSIBILITY OF ADVERTISING

A fourth suggestion is that the Advertising Department become a detached, autonomous part of each corporation, responsible for telling the truth about the product.

It should not be subordinate to the Sales or any other department, because it has to act as a truth "geiger counter", revealing the product's strong and weak points. The Advertising department also represents one of the vital links with the consumer, and has to act responsibly with their interests in the product. Instead of basing advertising and marketing policy on exaggeration, deceptive emotional statements, and trumped up photography and art work, the advertising should be educational and informative about the product, so that the consumer can choose on the basis of fact.

The advertising should also tell what goes into the product, how it is made, processed, bottled or canned or packaged, and shipped. Advertising should restore the consumer's faith in the product, and remain straightforward. Honest advertising reflects an honest product. Therefore the department should be endowed with enough power to challenge anyone in the company who tries to produce a product that is low in quality and sold at a price above its value just for the purpose of increasing sales or satisfying production quotas.

SELF-EVALUATION WITHIN THE INDUSTRY

The fifth suggestion is probably the most difficult to accomplish because it demands a real confrontation with the realities of the corporation. All responsible and leading members of any industry, whether cooperating or competing, should at some point join together to discuss the progress and problems within the industry. At this time, the by-laws and rules of any constitutions of associations or any other groups that bind the industries should be re-examined and re-evaluated for validity and relevance.

The actions of each corporation in an industry cause an equal and opposite reaction for every other member. When one company's standards are lowered to reduce cost or time, the product of the entire industry is cheapened. When one company conceals itself, the entire industry undergoes suspicion. When one company will not cooperate, it undermines the strength of every other member.

It is therefore important to those who love the industry to protect its growth through knowing and revealing the truth, good or bad.

It is important for all members of the industry to unite and protect the interests of the consumer, before an outsider's ruthless crusade against a particular company destroys the integrity of all corporations in the industry.

Self-regulation in the industry by the corporation is the hardest step in creating a corporate conscience. But if the leaders of an industry have the courage and strength of their convictions, it is their single, most immediate responsibility to stand up for them to each and every member of the industry, to the press, and to the public.

Corporate responsibility to create a product of high quality, to market it with honesty, and to represent it with integrity, becomes a matter of human responsibility to society as well. If our products are an extension of our soul, we owe it to ourselves to maintain the standards we set for our way of life and thought.

Many of these ideas may not be valid, but at least we are concerned and thinking about ways to assume our responsibilities.

SELLING THE STORY--WHERE, HOW, AND IF

The following article consists of edited remarks presented at a panel on April 7, 1971 in connection with the Publicity Club of Boston's annual education course. Speakers on the panel were: Walter Salvi, Boston Record-American; John M. Falla, director of Public Relations, Babson College; and Charles A. Nekvasil, resident editor, Chicago Bureau, Industry Week Magazine. (Ed.).

Charles Nekvasil started off with a blast against the public relations community, yet paid tribute to good PR men, of which, he said there are too few. (Ed.).

I am convinced that 90 per cent of the PR men working today are idiots. I am rapidly getting fed up with PR men. Public relations, as I saw it, meant dealing with the many different publics your firm interacts with. For an industrial PR man, of course, the industrial magazine is one of the prime channels of communication to reach those publics.

Therefore you would think PR men would make some attempt to understand that channel wouldn't you? My experience has been that they don't.

The stuff that crosses my desk is pure unadulterated garbage. PR men simply won't take the time to analyze publications. They don't take the time to find out what a publication wants, or what would be of interest to its readers. No, they are too interested in putting out a 48-page kit on the firm's newest capless screw machine or some other item of consequence.

Example: My magazine, Industry Week, reaches every manufacturing plant in the country employing over 100 people---all industries, from chemicals to steel. We have two rules for news: something which will significantly alter the picture in one industry, or something which will cross several industry lines.

Despite this, I'll invariably get a call from a PR man, who wants me to come out to his plant to write a feature on a new line of screws his company has just developed. This isn't news, so I take about 20 minutes explaining our editorial philosophy----telling him what we are interested in and what we don't want.

Two weeks later the same man calls me and he wants me to come out and do a feature on a new line of bolts.

Wasn't he listening when I explained what we were interested in? Apparently not. I have yet to find many PR men who do listen; consequently, I've yet to run any of their stories. I don't have to. In an average issue of our magazine, there are usually fewer than six stories that came from press releases Almost every major story, including all features, are self generated by our large staff.

Please don't think that I'm condeming <u>all</u> PR men. All editors need help now and then when I find a PR man who does take the time to understand our publication, I literally bend over backwards to help him--- if he has something newsworthy.

Unfortunately about half the PR men I come in contact with turn out to be publicity hacks. Some time ago I asked for a statement on the condition of a certain industry from a firm. The PR man promised to get me a statement. He was late and finally gave me a line about how busy he was. Exasperated, I said, "Look I'm giving you the chance to act as an industry leader. We're asking one of your executives to give us a statement. We are offering you a platform in one of the largest industrial magazines in the country. Isn't that more valuable to your corporate image than cranking

out 40 releases about Joe Doaks being named sales manager in Tulsa?

In this instance I shamed the PR man into doing something for me and made him realize that value of what I sought. The point is, however, I haven't the time to teach PR men the rules of the game.

So PR men go their way, sending me dozens of releases totally unrelated to what we are doing. If they would only spend ten minutes studying our magazine and come up with a story for us. It's all very frustrating for one who has been trained in public relations and who really believes in good PR. The problem is there are so many ill informed people in the field. When you have ill informed people informing other people you have a real mess on your hands.

Are Nekvasil's comments a heavy handed indictment of the PR profession? Most major magazine editors would agree with him. He gets about 1,500 releases a week and might use two or three. (Ed.).

Jack Falla, director of PR at Babson College, Wellesley, Mass., sees two facets of the publicity function of public relations.

"PR has three fundamental jobs," he said. "We first try to identify a problem, then create and sell a solution to the administration, and finally we tell our various publics what we are doing. This last step is the publicity function and it is where we must begin using the media to carry our message."

According to Falla, a PR practitioner---particularly one working for a college---must be an interpreter. He stands between his institution and its publics and tries to explain each to the other.

Publicity, in this case, becomes more than mere tub thumping but a means of gaining vital public understanding and support.

In his second role, a PR man is an extension of the media's news gathering resources. "He should think of himself," said Falla, "as less of a salesman and more of an extension of the city desk. Even the largest metropolitan dailies don't have the manpower to cover every college campus so it is left up to the PR man to report newsworthy events to the media.

"This doesn't mean releasing just the good news but also the bad and even the ugly in the interest of maintaining credibility with the media as well as satisfying the right of the public to know."

Finally we'll see how a working newspaper man, Walter Salvi, of the Boston Record-American, views the situation. (Ed.).

Newspapermen and magazine editors rely on the public relations function out of necessity. Unlike a reporter with a different lead each day, the PR man is totally familiar with the institution or corporation he represents. With a limited staff, the editor turns to the PR man for some judgement of what is or is not newsworthy.

As an extension of the press the PR man is in a position where he may be tempted to present a biased story. If he does this once, the chances are that he will have little opportunity to do it again. Newspaper men take sadistic pleasure in getting at the bottom of a glossed over release. Sometimes press releases can return to haunt the PR man who writes deceptively.

Knowing what the media are looking for is at least half the turn of the key to success. Many metropolitan newspapers have readerships of over 500,000. The closer your story comes to interesting that readership, the closer you are to print.

Editors look for news that directly affects the lives of the readership, like the cost of living index and the Vietnam war. Since few PR men ever have a story of this magnitude, the off-beat approach is good. Even the most sophisticated readership needs a break from the world's burdens, and a good editor knows this.

When a university building is being blown up by radicals, it's a refreshing change to read about a high school physics class inventing a machine that can catapult eggs across a football field.

There are certain stories that a PR man handles best. The technical story behind a new automobile engine is a perfect example. Most reporters simply don't have the time to learn the subtleties of engineering. On the other hand, engineers spend a good deal of time explaining to their people what it is that makes their engine the greatest thing since the invention of the wheel. The PR man literally becomes an expert on that particular engine.

The story announcing the promotion of an employee to vice-president or the opening of a new plant is usually well handled by the PR man. He has all the correct information at his fingertips which the reporter doesn't.

The bread and butter tool for the PR man is the press release. It serves two functions. First, if it is an announcement story, the release will be the entire thing. If a larger story is involved, the release will generally serve to whet the reporter's appetite. A good release will often result in follow-up.

Whatever it deals with, a good release should be timely and significant. If it doesn't fill these two requirements, the editor will kill it.

How do you determine the format of a story? This type of judgement comes from working directly with the media. You, as PR man, assume the role of the media. There are many alternatives. An editor or reporter can take a story over the phone, or accept copy for a full page feature with pictures. Again, is the story timely? A fund raising campaign may wait for days to run, but a riot story has to run at once or it's dead. Ask yourself the same question the editor has to. Can it wait?

Newspaper editors are very busy people and tend to be cynical. Thus the lead paragraph, or sometimes merely the return address on the envelope, may be all they will read. If you don't tell your story in your

first two paragraphs, then don't bother.

Frequently the real news of a release is buried on the third page. Don't send in long releases. Ideally a release should be a page, in rare cases two pages. When a busy editor gets a 14 page release from the XYZ Broom Co., more often than not, he'll throw the release into the circular file without even reading it. If he's kind and has the time (he rarely does have the time), he'll wade through the florid prose, extract the news, and run a story about four paragraphs long.

Be clear and concise. Editors don't like to do a lot of rewriting, so avoid colorful prose in your releases. Strict news that informs will often find its way into print.

To sum up: get to know the publication (newspaper or magazine) before sending material to it; be timely; put news in the lead paragraph; write clearly and be brief. Follow these rules constantly, and you will see many of your releases in print.

NEW ENGLAND ELECTRIC SYSTEM -- A GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY

by

Peter L. Bugbee

Mr. Bugbee is editor of Contact, the house organ of New England Electric System.

New England Electric System is committed to supplying its customers' energy needs in a manner consistent with being a good environmental neighbor.

With this objective, set down in the April 1970 issue of CONTACT, the company employee publication, New England Electric System formally launched its program to inform the various publics of the steps it is taking to preserve the environment.

In launching the information campaign, Chief Executive Officer, Robert Krause, set the stage by saying, "The problems of environmental control are complex and far reaching. We do not have all the answers, but the important fact to keep in mind is that we are working at solutions and have been for some time prior to the present emphasis on the subject.

"By the nature of our business we have a dual responsibility to protect the environment as the public rightly demands, and to meet their energy requirements. We intend to meet both of these responsibilities."

With electric energy needs doubling every ten years, one of New England Electric's primary concerns is with planning and building new power generation facilities. However, no plans can be formulated without considering licensing problems for a plant or line and its impact on the environment. The task is to make our facilities more compatible with the environment while continuing to maintain reliability and reasonable prices.

Until recently such matters were evaluated and solutions made by the engineers in charge of constructing the new facilities. Today, a new group of environmental specialists has been established to provide the expertise necessary to achieve the best balance between cost and environmental factors.

Part of their responsibility is overseeing research studies commissioned by the company that can monitor the effects of our present facilities on the environment and determine environmentally compatible sites for future expansion.

Here is a sampling of such studies now in progress.

Worcester Polytechnic Institute's Alden Research Laboratory in Holden, Mass., is currently making several studies of water flow and discharge at generating plant sites. For the Brayton Point generating station, they are conducting experiments designed to reveal how the condenser cooling water can be discharged without having a detrimental effect on neighboring Mount Hope Bay. Using a 40 foot by 50 foot model, Alden Research can simulate the hydraulic situation in the bay and can show the best means of discharging the heated water will be studied, thus allowing a decision on which method produces the least effect on the bay.

Alden Research is also using a scale model of a pumped storage hydroelectric complex under construction in northwestern Massachusetts to determine river flow and its effects on facilities being built there. The scale model dam and riverbed will undergo tests at all extreme conditions to measure its reliability and to minimize the effect on the natural flow of the river.

Air quality control is another important area of testing, especially near fossil-fueled (coal, oil or natural gas) generating stations. New England Electric System has long been attentive to air quality control. In the 1940's the system used mechanical dust collectors that were 85 percent efficient for removing particulates from plant stacks. By the early 1950's electrostatic precipitators were available and were first installed at the Salem Harbor station in 1951-52. This upped the efficiency of particulate control to 90-95 percent. Precipitators were refined by the 60's and immediately introduced to the system, creating a 77-99 percent efficiency for removing particulates.

In the past few years, with the help of data collection stations located near major generating stations, sulfuric oxide concentrations have been the main thrust of research efforts.

Careful monitoring of the various aspects of pollution even includes hiring acoustical engineering consultants to investigate and monitor noise levels at generating stations. Their studies, along with those of the company's central research laboratory,

have lead to the development of a number of noise refining devices including baffles or sound absorbing walls to be installed in front of fans, louvers and transformers at generating stations. At substation sites this type of research has also been effectively applied in designing walls to reduce present noise levels. For planned substations, the physical parameters are considered e.g. proximity to residential and industrial neighbors. With this data, the research lab can make recommendations to the Engineering Department on transformer changes or the kind of transformer most suitable on the criterior of sound.

New England Electric is part owner in a number of Yankee nuclear generating plants operating or under construction throughout New England. Extensive environmental studies have been underway for some time to assess the effectiveness of controls and procedures established to limit the effects of thermal and radioactive effluents on the environment.

Each Yankee plant has a comprehensive surveillance program designed to monitor the atmospheric, terrestrial and aquatic or marine environment in the vicinity of the plant.

This program consists of four basic areas of study: 1) radiological monitoring; 2) physical investigations of surrounding waters; 3) biological studies and 4) meteorology. All studies are planned in close cooperation with state and Federal government agencies.

Environmental research cannot be treated at the local level alone. Working to protect our environment must be a regional and national industry goal.

A group of New England utilities have agreed to undertake with the Edison Electric Institute and Avco Everett Research Laboratory the design phase of a 50,000-Kilowatt MHD (magnetohydrodynamic) power generation program that includes important air and water pollution controls.

In the MHD generator, a high temperature gas is passed through the magnetic field. The motion of the gas through the magnetic field generates electricity. Coal or fossil fuels could be used as the heat source.

The New England Power Company, a subsidiary of New England Electric, has numerous generating stations on riverways and near coastal regions. Because of this the company maintains close liaison with many Federal,

state and local agencies that have interests in recreation, conservation, fish and wildlife.

Picnic areas, boat launching facilities, visitors centers, woodlands for hiking and hunting and a new string of canoe bases are just a sampling of the recreation facilities provided free to the public near NEPCO generating stations.

Since 1968, the company has been cooperating in studies conducted in conjunction with the Connecticut River Basin fish restoration program. The Power Company has contributed over $17,000 as its share of the electric utilities matching funds for the program's study of anadromous fish (fish born in fresh water, migrate to the sea and return to the stream of birth to spawn). The studies are partly concerned with design parameters for fish passage facilities at our Vernon, Bellows Falls and Wilder Dams and with the behavorial patterns of anadromous fish.

Another key aspect of environmental concern is with the undergrounding of electric distribution lines. New England Electric is cooperating fully with an Electric Utility Task Force that has recommended a

target date of 1975 for undergrounding distribution lines in all new urban and suburban residential areas. Industry efforts in this direction include a $7 million research project on underground transmission systems. In addition, the industry is concentrating its efforts on improving the design of power plants and overhead transmission lines. Landscaping and decorative walls at plant sites and new-sculptured, single-pole, high-voltage lines are just a taste of this esthetic concern.

One of the newest innovations being used in construction of new transmission lines is the use of a helicopter to transport equipment. The copters move the transmission poles to a new section of a 345,000-volt line right-of-way to avoid building access roads, usually needed for construction and later for maintenance. With heavy equipment that can operate without roads and economical helicopter service the system has put the two together to preserve some of the environment's natural beauty.

Air, water, noise and "eye" pollution. In the effort to be a good environmental neighbor New England Electric System is working on them all.

THE TECHNIQUES OF INTERVIEWING

by

Gerald Powers

Interviewing is an art which most people in the communications field should study, and eventually master. A skilled interviewer can usually elicit a good story from even the most reticent subject.

You may have to interview someone for a news story, a policy statement, a feature story, or a profile. Techniques will vary according to the specific assignment, but the profile interview is usually the most extensive, so let's look at interviewing from that point of view.

When Time does a cover story on a noted personality, the reporter literally lives with the subject for a week or two. This is an ideal situation, but such in depth coverage is usually impossible for the routine profile interview. Most of the time the interviewer will have to catch a busy man or woman for an hour at the office or over lunch.

The overriding element for a successful interview is plain common sense.

This should go without saying, ditto proper attire, but, unfortunately, I've seen interviewers acting and looking like utter slobs at times.

When you make an appointment for an interview make sure your subject knows exactly who you are, what publication you represent (even if it is the company newspaper or magazine), and the exact purpose of the interview. Obviously a profile type of interview will take more time than responses to a few quick questions on company policy (the latter should probably be done over the phone).

Once you set up the appointment get busy on your homework. Next to the interview itself, this is the most important part of the operation. First check the proper spelling and pronunciation of the subject's name. People get unhappy when they see their names misspelled or hear them mispronounced.

Next get a resume of your subject and study it, then look him up in Who's Who, read his publications, talk to associates, and generally find out as much as possible about the man before going to the interview.

Several years ago I saw a hack interviewer hold up an impressive tome written by a leading foreign affairs expert and blithely say, "Well Mr.....I understand you've just written a book?" Insulting? Yes. The man probably put in a year or two writing the book and then gets a question like this! A professional interviewer will have read the book, or at least browsed through it.

The best way to interview is with pencil, notebook, AND tape recorder. While you get the subject's responses on tape, you can make notes about personality traits, dress, speech, and mannerisms. If you use a tape recorder ask permission first. This is just common courtesy. It is presumptuous to barge into someone's office and start setting up equipment without advance warning. Also, some people become nervous when staring at a microphone. If you check this out ahead of time, the chances are that the person you are interviewing will have no objection to using a tape recorder.

Although you have set up the interview in advance, when you go in, introduce yourself immediately and remind your subject what publication you represent and what type of story you'll be doing.

Have some questions ready to go after completing the preliminary formalities. The reply to one of your questions may open up a whole new avenue of approach which will necessitate scrapping all your other questions, but don't go in cold. Try to present your questions in such a way that your subject will have to think a bit before responding.

Be perceptive enough to quickly size up your subject's personality. Here's where a little psychology may come into play. If the person you are interviewing is blunt and outspoken, don't beat around the bush, he won't appreciate it. Be direct and forceful and the man will respond similarly. If you are interviewing a VIP, don't be in awe of him and, above all, don't be obsequious, this will only irritate him. A truly big man will sense when the interviewer is nervous and will try to put him at ease. But this is a reversal of roles. The person doing the interview should do the leading, not vice versa.

If the subject is timid and shy, treat him gingerly, with courtesy and do your best to make him feel comfortable. Several years ago I brought a Yugoslavian industrialist into a TV studio.

The man was in his late '50s, spoke broken English, and was obviously ill at ease. I was fascinated to watch a highly skilled interviewer make the man feel comfortable and draw him out. Naturally the man was a Communist, but the last thing in the world he needed was a blunt and direct question like, "Are you a Communist?" Eventually it came out that indeed he was a Communist and held a rather responsible position in the party hierarchy, but all this information was elicited with care and caution by the interviewer. When the taping session was over, the Yugoslavian admitted that he had been very nervous and then he thanked the reporter profusely. When he saw the interview on TV the next day, the Yugoslavian was pleased. Had the reporter taken a hard line with this man, the interview would have been a disaster.

Next comes, perhaps, the hardest thing in an interview. Keep the pace moving smoothly and rapidly. This skill comes with experience. There is nothing worse than prolonged silence during an interview. It is embarrassing for both parties.

A friend of mine once had to interview a famous historian who was quite taciturn.

The interview was a disaster as the subject replied with "....no....uh-huh....yep.....sure is....and could be." My friend destroyed the tape and never used the interview. Some people are very reticent and getting information out of them is like pulling teeth. The other side of the coin, of course, is the man who never shuts up and goes off on tangents. How do you get him back to your line of questioning? It takes skill and tact and you must try quietly, but forcefully, to bring the subject back to the main thrust of your question.

Once the interview gets rolling, show interest in the subject's work. The sex life of the fruit fly may be dull as dish water to you, but, remember, this man has spent years of his life researching the subject and is all wrapped up in it. His life's work may very well be the dominant theme of your story when you take to the typewriter, so you may have to quickly gain a rudimentary knowledge of all sorts of strange subjects. Again, more homework!

Don't apologize for your questions as long as they are in good taste. Remember you are in the driver's seat (or should be).

If your subject starts to talk in broad generalities (a disease of politicians), tactfully try to nail him down. If the man refuses to be nailed down, move on to something else. Don't beat a dead horse.

Have a good sense of timing. The person you are talking to is probably very busy. Be alert enough to realize when it is time to close the interview. Last winter I watched a world famous diplomat casually glance at his watch while holding a press conference. He later said he had another 15 minutes to spare, but one of the interviewers caught the signal and quickly said, "Thank you, Mr....." The interview was over, the reporters were happy, and the diplomat was on his way to the airport with time to spare.

Finally keep in mind that the person you are interviewing is human just like you. He can have good days and bad and is subject to the same quirks and moods that all of us are. Family problems, business difficulties, an ulcer, office politics, etc., can sometimes cause an ordinarily amiable person to be gruff and irritable. Make allowances for this.

Skill in interviewing comes with experience, of course, but if you do your homework before the interview,

then use plain common sense, tact, and sensitivity; you should come out reasonably well, and hopefully, have the raw material for a good profile.

INDUSTRIAL PUBLIC RELATIONS

The following is an edited version of a panel that took place on April 21, 1971 as part of the Publicity Club of Boston's annual education course. The panel was entitled "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Industrial PR (But Were Afraid to Ask)." The speakers were: Stephen N. Nissen, account executive; Michael Morris, Vice President; and James DiClerico, Vice President; all of Burson-Marsteller, N.Y. (Ed.).

1

Most people would consider industrial public relations rather dull stuff. What's happening in industrial PR today? Let's take a look.

Bob Townsend, author of Up the Organization, says fire the whole PR department and any outside PR firms too. He's the same guy who said fire the advertising department and their agencies. The big difference between advertising and public relations in Townsend's mind shows up when he says go out and hire the best new ad

agency you can find. He doesn't say go out and retain a top PR firm. That's symptomatic of the industrial PR business in 1971. It seems that no sensible businessman wants to spend a dime for public relations because his main interests are sales and profits. If PR can show results on the bottom line, he'll listen to our proposals. That means we as an industry must concentrate on results, not techniques.

This leads to the question we always ask a new prospect, "What business are you in?" While the industrial publicist isn't in the business of turning out press releases, he isn't in the business of selling a client's product either. We are in the business of communicating with markets to create a better selling environment for our client's products. To relate this communications process to our pragmatic, profit-minded businessman, we must think like a product manager and set up our programs with an eye towards measuring effectiveness. We'd like to ask <u>you</u> to think like a product manager as we explain how we go about developing and executing programs in support of markets.

In addition to publicity generated by mail, we often gain favorable coverage by paying special attention to the press. This means getting away from your desk and out into the field to meet with editors,

customers, and clients.

Sometimes it's as simple as inviting an industrial editor to a seminar, or responding to an editor's request to visit a lab. Sometimes the only answer is a full blown conference. This requires demonstrable news. It is also a good idea to physically show industrial editors how customers use a client's product. Often you can simply tie into an event that your client is holding. One of our clients was bringing in dozens of prospects to show them a new materials handling technique called shrink film packaging. We simply made room for ten top industrial editors, supplied them with a press kit, and achieved very good results. The major point here is that when you go beyond the traditional mailing publicity techniques, your extra efforts pay off. We've just discussed some ways of making news happen. Another way of getting coverage is to tie your client in to current events (noise control, fire prevention week, etc.).

So far we've talked primarily about ways of generating publicity, but a good PR job goes far beyond clippings. Remember our business is to set up a good environment for our clients to sell their products in.

When fiberglas tires were still a lab curiosity, we began getting out the news to a technical audience in Detroit and Akron which ultimately resulted in the

inventor winning a designers' award and the manufacturer winning over the car makers. After the tire became standard in Detroit, we went after the consumer with wire photos, newspaper mats, and a lot of radio and TV spots. More recently our job has gone beyond traditional publicity to include pop at the tire dealers' store, banners, and an answer wheel to get the consumer to ask his dealer for fiberglas tires.

Getting back to the theme of extra effort, we've found that even routine assignments can turn out to be winners if you try hard enough. How about a community relations seminar for plant managers? It could have been a dull meeting, but we showed plant managers how to handle a "bad day at Black Rock".....how to respond to trouble ranging from a mothers' march to the plant blowing up. There was a lot of role playing. A manager was interviewed by a TV newsman and later we played the videotape back and critiqued it. The plant managers left with a kit of materials including a book on emergency press relations.

Distributor relations can also be a dull assignment, but we tried a different approach. A client was using professional athletes to help sell their products at customer meetings, we arranged for them to drop in on youth groups to discuss sports and, incidentally, to urge

the kids to stay in school. Local distributors sponsored these events and resulted in a lot of favorable publicity. After a year of this "drop in" technique, the program began to receive national attention from the press. Perhaps the best recognition of all came when we won a PRSA Silver Anvil last year for the program.

Now let's look at a case history of a case history.

2

A CASE HISTORY OF A CASE HISTORY

The case history is probably the most basic technique in industrial publicity. Usually its prime function is the development of a story showing how a third party successfully uses a client's product.

It is more likely that a manufacturer would be interested in a story on General Motors' success with its product than a similar story on a smaller, less well-known company.

Admittedly the case history is an old standby, but it basically isn't synonymous with routine.

When our client, a large firm, asked for recommendations on a case history program, we analyzed both their

long and short term objectives. Then we recommended they look to smaller companies for the integrated circuit applications story they were looking for.

Why this shift in approach?

For one thing we'd be able to get more stories and get them with less effort, because smaller companies don't have the red tape larger firms do. You usually deal with the president or a senior executive.

It is also easier to obtain information on unique projects which larger firms tend to keep under wraps. And, most importantly, the smaller companies need communications help. By giving them that help, the larger firm could increase its equity as a supplier. This can mean a lot in the future if the small company prospered.

A few years ago we developed a case history on such a company. It was a small customer of a large firm which grew out of the availability of low cost integrated circuits, and the free application engineering assistance suppliers like the large firm provided.

The small company also filled the bill on the urique application criteria mentioned above. Its product was a pioneering digital readout system which, in its own way, was analagous to the change from pony express to telegraph.

The system which was based on the use of the larger firms' integrated circuits, replaced one of the most

precise mechanical systems ever developed.

Once we learned a little about the company, we sent a standard product questionnaire to the larger firm's sales engineer servicing the account.

To prove what we've said about the small company needing help, here is a quote from a letter written by the larger firm's sales engineer who serviced the account.

"The current business situation at X is such that they could not sustain a major setback.....but the unit is sound and I have a great deal of confidence in the product....and would like nothing better than to see X succeed with our help."

At the time the major outlet for the small firm's story looked like Steel Magazine--now called Industry Week--because the majority of its readership was involved with heavy duty machinery.

The story we wrote was based on the three-fold resource of the questionnaire, the larger company's sales engineer, and the small firm's president.

Accuracy at the outset can only work in your favor. In this case, careful attention to detail resulted in an on-target manuscript requiring minimum editing. For many this initial effort would have been the end of the line, but we aimed for long mileage.

We took two photos for the case history, condensed the information and refined it, creating one photo caption for the trade press and another for the general press.

Although we targeted the original story for Steel Magazine, our close contact with Electronics Magazine revealed a good opportunity in this non-competing publication. We used the original information to land that story, as well as two other magazines--McGraw-Hill's Product Engineering, and Electro Technology Magazine.

While engineers and manufacturers are important to reach, the man who writes the order is usually the purchasing agent. So we worked out coverage in another McGraw-Hill publication. This story sparked at least a dozen buyers to call the editor to find out how they could get more information about the small firm's system.

Synergism is a much abused word, but Burson-Marsteller's synergistic approach resulted in a major placement in this case. An account man servicing a chemical account came across a key editorial opportunity both for the larger and small firm in Tool and Manufacturing Engineer--the monthly magazine of the American Society of Tool & Manufacturing Engineers.

After initial contact by the chemical account man, the story was turned over to the account group handling the large

firm. This developed into a new product story in one issue and a cover story in another issue, which carried the additional bonus of a reprint offer by the magazine.

In the magazine we made other equally important placements, which related back to the original story material developed for Steel Magazine.

From a measurable result standpoint, nothing could beat the story which appeared in Mechanical Engineering. It stimulated about 40 letters, telephone and written inquiries, handled by the larger firm, Burson-Marsteller's account men, and Mechanical Engineering's editor.

When they aren't reading trade and professional publications, machinery users also read newspapers. So we again modified the story on the small firm to the needs of the press and came up with good coverage running from the business news section of the Miami News--the hometown newspaper of the smaller firm--to the Journal of Commerce, and other important dailies in cities such as Detroit

What became of the original reason we developed the story--the one for Steel Magazine? Instead of the modest product story we originally envisioned, Steel's editor decided to write separate stories about the large firm's development role and the small company's system.

The story on the large firm ran three pages and contained quotes from important company executives.

That story was followed by a two-page spread on the small firm, with a reprint offer on the whole section.

What were the end use figures on that original 800 word story developed from a routine product questionnaire? The final tally indicated that the story appeared in at least 17 publications read by more than two million people. Naturally both firms were delighted.

This letter from the large firm's president sums up his company's feelings:

"I would like to express our extreme gratitude to you for all the efforts you have put forth in our behalf. He further said, "Between the guidance, patience, and technical skills of the larger firm's applications group, and the concise, well written publicity stories from which a multitude of inquiries were received. The smaller firm feels as though the larger firm were a parent....They have fostered us through a critical period and we know they will continue to guide our progress as we grow in the industry."

In terms of hard dollars the small firm received from publicity efforts, the company landed enough inquiries to backlog its production for 18 months.

This is a dramatic change from the point less than a year ago when the large firm's sales engineer wrote,

"The current situation at X is such that it could not cope with a major setback."

For the large firm, the publicity satisfied a major marketing objective by drawing calls and letters to its applications groups form other machine-tool companies desiring similar help in developing integrated circuit equipment.

Prior to this point the large firm had recognized the potential of this market, but never effectively tapped it. The project with the small firm was also a major contribution to the larger firm's long-range growth. It demonstrated to thousands of engineering and non-engineering managers that the larger firm provided a very sophisticated brand of customer service geared to innovative electronics applications for all industries. In one case, for example, the publicity generated an inquiry which eventually opened the door at a major electronics company, an accomplishment which no salesman from the larger company had been able to do before.

WHAT IS MARKETING PUBLIC RELATIONS?

Marketing public relations is the business of communicating with markets. This brief definition is still an imperfect one. Consider the words "non-commercial message." They clearly exclude advertising in print media and broadcast commercials, but they are too vague too bar direct-mail advertising and sales promotion. These areas are definitely not in the main stream of public relations, but some projects we've handled at Burson-Marsteller really don't fall within the traditional concept of public relations. These projects reflect the fact that our business is communicating with markets, not just writing press releases. This stems from the fact that our company is a total communications one.

What makes marketing public relations successful? The first thing is to set realistic, pertinent objectives. Second, plan carefully and be specific. Next be able to measure success. And last, have a clear understanding of what techniques are available and what they can do.

There are three basic types of techniques in marketing public relations: programmed publicity, controlled communications, and special events. We'll look at the

three individually.

Don't get hung up on the word programmed. We are not saying the other categories are unprogrammed or unplanned. But we are saying that you can't meet specific objectives with catch-as-catch-can publicity. The elemental thing about publicity is editorial endorsement. Your client's news moves from him through the editor where it picks up the endorsement of and objective third party, and on to your client's customer.

The first, and possibly best recognized, and still the most common form of publicity is taking the news to the media. This includes news releases on such things as new products, price changes, personnel appointments, etc., case histories on how and to what advantage a customer is using your client's product, aticles authored by your client on how to use his products or the state of technology in his industry. This type of publicity remains important for one good reason: when it's used correctly, it can be wholly effective.

The next category of publicity is taking, or bringing, the media to the news. This includes interviews with your client, press conferences, press tours, perhaps of a client's plant or research lab, or one of his customer's plants, and roundtable discussions, where you might bring a number of your client's technical people together

for a background session with one or several trade editors.

The last part of publicity is creating news. This can mean exploiting an opportunity such as a moon shot in which your client's product plays a role, or staging an event such as a display of wheels for a client with a stake in tires.

If we've implied that publicity is only print, don't believe it. The pervasiveness and impact of the broadcast media are recognized and specifically catered to in most publicity programs.

Before leaving publicity, let's discuss the word programmed. This can include a client's marketing objectives, strategies for meeting those communications objectives, and specific activities and goals related to those strategies.

The next basic technique is controlled communications. Here the information flows directly from the client to his customer. Editorial endorsement is sacrificed for absolute control over the message, timing, and selection of audience. Since the cost per individual reached by controlled communication is higher than by publicity, the audience typically is smaller and better identified.

Controlled communications can take the form of newsletters, written either for customers or for the people within a client organization to help them deal with customers, prestige publications, and special events, like a daily newspaper put out by one of our clients at a five day industry convention.

The third basic technique is special events. These are meant to bring clients face-to-face with their customers for a two-way flow of information. They include speeches to trade and business groups, client-sponsored seminars and symposia, design and award programs, and exhibits and shows.

Now we'd like to discuss some examples of these techniques at work. In each case we'll disclose what the marketing and communications objectives were, why the particular technique was selected, and what the results were.

As we go through the examples, you'll recognize three trends in marketing public relations. First, and particularly in the present economy, the business is becoming more results-oriented. Second, with more companies and products vying for relatively fixed amounts of editorial space and customer time, the business is increasingly competitive.

These two trends lead to the third, a generally higher level of sophistication throughout the business.

4

MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

Measuring the effectiveness of marketing public relations is the most difficult part of our work, and it looms more and more important, particularly in today's economy.

Although measuring effectiveness is difficult, it's not impossible. It's relatively easy to measure effectiveness in areas on controlled communications and special events.

The problem of measurement really gets tough in the area of publicity. The case history of a case history was one of the rare examples where precise measurement was possible. The reason that it was easy was that the effort had a tight market audience and the absence of other outside influences, but it usually doesn't work that way.

Most PR measurement must be based on professional intuition. You place a given article in a given publication because your experience and knowledge of the market tells you it will help ring the cash register.

Then, when the article appears, you claim effectiveness. If this is all you can do, however, you'd better sell the value of your intuition to your client.

Your measurement can only be as good as your objectives. If your objectives are off base, or impractical, or not specific enough, then you can measure until you are blue in the face, and, maybe even prove that you met your objectives, but you are not going to be effective. Setting good objectives does not solve the problem of measuring the effectiveness of public relations, but it sure protects you from exercise in futility.

Since we need good objectives to measure effectiveness, let's see what it takes to set them. First is a good fix on what publicity is supposed to do. Can publicity increase sales? The answer is yes (we proved this in the case history study).

Does publicity aid sales calls? Publicity in the right places can often make that tough first call much easier.

A third function of publicity is to supplement and complement advertising. One of the best ways to sell publicity is as part of the total communications effort aimed at a given set of objectives, where publicity and advertising take on complementary objectives or complementary media.

Another job that publicity can do is solve peripheral communications problems related to, but not specifically in support of sales, such as improving attitudes about a company, or fighting product integrity battles.

Finally, publicity's job may be to flush out marketing intelligence. We've had instances where market intelligence gained by pursuing stories in one area brought about a complete re-evaluation or redirection of a marketing program, or the launching of a new one.

Thus knowing what publicity can do is the first step toward setting good objectives and hence being able to measure effectiveness.

The next step is being intimately familiar with the client's marketing problems. Public relations efforts based on a superficial knowledge of the client's marketing problems and objectives lead to more fiascos than incompetence does. You can't set good communications objectives, unless you have a good fix on sales objectives.

The best objectives are those that give you specifics with which you can set communications objectives and, in fact, against which you can measure your performance. These specifics are figures on such things as:

Increasing sales...

Broadening distribution...

Uncovering sales leads...

And stimulating inquiries for product information, sales calls, bids, etc.

Given good sales objectives and our knowledge of what publicity can do, we're equipped to set communications objectives that we have some hope of measuring against. These communications objectives might concentrate on areas such as:

Increase knowledge or awareness of product, product application, or company...

Change an opinion about a product, application, or company...

Change attitudes

Identify a company as a leader, as a progressive factor in its field, or with some idea or concept.

Now we have something to measure against, but just what is it we measure? There are three ways you can measure publicity:

By quantity...

By quality...

And by impact...

Most attempts at measuring publicity effectiveness

today start with quantity, in fact, most attempts stop with quantity, if they get that far.

Quantity measurements usually take in three things. How many clips or radio or TV spots did the story get? How much space or air time did it get? How many people were exposed to the story?

Most of us at one point in our careers have probably taken the pounds of clips approach to proving effectiveness of a public relations project or program. Actually it's not a bad approach, even if you question the readability of clipping services.

Probably the most dramatic use of the pounds-of-clips approach is the story about the PR man who tried to make his point with his company's sales forces by having thousands of clips dropped from the ceiling of an auditorium just before he was about to give his report at a sales meeting. He got the salesmen's attention.

So, numbers of clips are one way to use quantity.

Another example is the column-inches of free space route.

Several years ago for one client we ended up with a total of 3,136 column inches. We then picked one of the key publications in the client's field as the basis for computing how many magazine pages the publicity represented. It came out to 157 pages. Next we multiplied this by the publications advertising page rate

--let's say $1000 per page--and came up with the indication that to get the same coverage in advertising would have cost the client $157,000. The annual public relations budget was not nearly that high, so the per-page costs for publicity were considerably lower than that of the higher-budgeted advertising.

Another quantity type measurement would be the number of covers. Just about anybody who gets any magazine looks at the cover, even if he doesn't read a word inside. So we can count that as a sure shot exposure.

The nagging qustion, of course, is how many understood what was on the cover, and that it was your company's product, or that they reacted favorably to it, or that they acted because of it.

Numbers of covers, nevertheless, are a good quantitative measurement, and it even has a little "quality" going for it as well because of its prominent position in the media.

Next we come to "how many people?" This is simply a counting of noses, based on circulation of print media, listeners to radio, and viewers of TV. How many people were exposed to a particular story, or a particular year's program?

If we took an average circulation of 20,000, we would claim the client's publicity was exposed 20x96

publications or two million people during that measured period.

Although this is a numbers game, don't knock it. Quantity is a legitimate measurement, and a believable one, as long as you don't claim too much for it. It can be related to sales, if only because the figures make it obvious that the product's message is being exposed to many more people than the sales force could possibly expose it to.

Measuring quality relates mostly to what kind of media is most important to you--trades, business, newspapers, etc. If you are selling mouth wash, an article on your new package in Modern Packaging is not going to do much for you.

Conversely, a product story in the consumer press may have little real marketing value for a steel producer compared to a feature in Iron Age.

The answer to the question "What media are important to your marketing program?" is a good one if you intend to measure your results. Selection of media, of course, goes back to your marketing public relations program and how tightly you specify your media goals. Any good advertising campaign is based on selection of specific media that reaches most of the buying influences your company wants to reach.

So should a publicity campaign. It's simply a good idea to specify target publications for publicity concentration. We have even gone so far as to set specific "bogies" for ourselves, like three feature articles of one page or more in House & Home, or four cover stories in a list of ten publications, or perhaps even a cover story in Business Week, or Life.

One more point about media selection. For several of our major industrial advertising clients, our marketing research arm does media attitude audits among a sampling of the client's important buying influences. One survey form, for example, asked 625 customers to rate the five leading packaging books. The respondents had a choice of five ratings----very high, high, average, low, very low, and don't know, for seven categories.

If this were applied to the publicity program, the selection of any one or two books that may dominate the evaluation---books that are read by most of your customers---would be an obvious step to measuring quality of your results.

You might develop your own rating system and give a 10 to any major story in either of these leading books and only a 3 or 4 to stories in others, and then compare your final score to the target you, and your marketing management, agreed to.

Regardless of the technique you use, the more quality you can demonstrate in your publicity results, the closer you are relating to the sale of your product. At the least, you are much closer to it than if you stopped with quantity.

The third way to measure public relations results--impact--gets you even closer to proving the value of PR in the marketing effort. However, proving impact is a much rougher job than quantity or quality.

In advertising, which by no means can claim perfection in measuring effectiveness, you at least have somewhat controlled conditions going for you. You can gather some fairly impressive statistics on who saw, read, and absorbed. But who believed what you said? That's a tough one for any communication technique.

The one salvation is inquiries, if that is what you want your communications to do. Usually these are measurable, and if you set them up properly, you can split publicity inquiries from inquiries generated by other forms of communications.

These, then, are the things we can measure, and we've already talked about what to measure against. In case it's all beginning to look fairly simple, let's look at some of the problems in measurement, beginning

with significance.

Some have suggested that computer techniques be applied to the evaluation of publicity results. A caution about the computer. Remember that the computer can only act on the equation prepared by the human element. Someone, not the computer, must decide what is or is not important, what is a good or bad standard for measurement.

One approach used recently involved measuring the desired company message in clips. If an insurance company, well known in life insurance, wanted to become known for its capabilities in casualty insurance, its news stories might always include references to this in describing the company.

An evaluation of clips and success in getting this word in print or stated on radio and TV--possibly with the help of a computer--could give a meaningful measurement of your publicity effectiveness.

A more common solution often suggested is research. Find out what the knowledge levels of your audience are about your products, its applications, and your company. Establish opinions and attitudes. Find out what your company's identity and reputation are.

This is done frequently in advertising because today's technologically conscious management is demanding it.

Management gets all kinds of measurement of the effectiveness of sales and sales people, on research and development, on personnel management, profit and loss. Why not advertising?

Today's management wants advertising results spelled out, and PR budgets are getting closer scrutiny too, even though total PR expenditure, in most companies, is generally much smaller than advertising. Burson-Marsteller is a fairly large agency, yet most of our clients have PR budgets less than $50,000 a year. Therefore, PR is not as big a dent in the company's profit and loss picture.

Thus cost is another major problem in measuring publicity effectiveness. What should a given amount of budget yield in clips, exposure or any other measurement you select? Are 2,000 clips worth a given amount of money? If you double that amount, should you expect a proportionate increase in clips?

How much money would management let you spend to benchmark attitudes, awareness, etc., and on a re-survey later on? This is fairly common in advertising today, but is it really practical for a publicity campaign? Often the cost of research would exceed, or be a very high percentage of the cost of the PR program, if you wanted a definitive survey.

Even if money is available for surveying, the problem of control must be reckoned with. How do you control the measurement of publicity vs. other communications techniques? And, more important, how can you control the factors of the marketplace which could influence changes in attitudes much more readily than any kind of communications? What about your sales force? Were significant changes made there that makes it a whole new ball game?

When do you start measuring? Certainly not when conditions are unusually positive or negative. If we were to survey consumer opinion about gas heating in a particular community, we'd be insane to do it right after a gas explosion occurred there. The explosion would set up an unusual bias against gas.

Time. You have to give a reasonable amount of it to measure your results. The nature of PR is to build up momentum over a period of time; therefore, six months after benchmarking a communications effort would be a bad time to re-survey. The time lag depends on the subject and the objectives.

In summary, what do we have at our disposal to measure publicity effectiveness tied to marketing objectives? First, any measuring is based on certain assumptions

and intuition. Above that there are four solid devices available to us.

The first are attitude audits, if you can afford them, before a program begins and later at regular intervals.

Secondly, recognition comparisons. If your objective is to increase recognition for some aspect of product or company, this too can be accomplished with before and after research, if you can afford it.

Third, sales increase by per cent. If publicity is your principal selling tool, then this probably is a good criteria. If it's one of many selling techniques, as in most industrial selling, then you have to be lucky and have the ideal situation, or you are headed for trouble. Most of us can't afford trouble in PR in these days of tight budgets any more than we can afford research in good days.

Finally, tie your measurement effectiveness to the cost of a sales call. What is the cost of a sales call in your company? How much can one sales call accomplish? What can publicity do for the same money?

In conclusion, not enough PR people work hard enough at developing measuring techniques to embellish their intuition. There are ways to make our results more meaningful to our clients.

We may not be able to measure our results in direct sales, but most of us probably can do a better job relating those results to sales in some fashion.

5

PRODUCT INTEGRITY

Most of the marketing public relations work we've talked about so far has dealt with the communication of favorable information about our clients and their products. The other side of the coin is the occasional need to communicate information in defense of products that come under attack.

First we should clarify things by firmly stating that the consumer has the right to expect and demand products that provide good value for his money. By the same token, he should not be confronted with products that constitute unmitigated threats to his health, safety, or quality of life. Products that violate these basic rights have no place on the market. They should never be offered to the consumer in the first place, and if they are--innocently or otherwise--they should be removed as soon as their detrimental effect is established. Products that clearly fall into this category are thalidomide, cyclamates, and various automobiles with defective parts.

There are, however, other categories of products that, like an accused man, deserve the best defense they can get. One is the product that is attacked without any real justification at all, usually for reasons beyond any question of value or safety. These cases are rare, but they do occur.

A far more common case is the product which is attacked with some justification, but without thoughtful consideration, or recognition of mitigating circumstances. Cases like these are like throwing out the baby with the bathwater and getting soaked in the process.

Now let's see what specific course of action and guidelines we suggest to our clients.

In general, the first step in developing a product defense is research.

The questions we ask are:

1. How much truth is there in the attackers' claims?

2. Where are the attackers off base? What facts have they failed to consider or make known?

3. To what extent has the client considered the problem, and what, if anything, is he doing about it?

4. What evidence exists to support claims on both sides of the question?

5. What is the larger question? By this we mean is our client's product being blamed for something it's only a small, but highly visible part of?

The next three steps are inform, educate, and proceed. Our specific guidelines for coping with the problem are these:

1. Don't generalize. That's what the attackers are usually doing. It doesn't help to respond in kind.

2. Don't over-react. The attackers usually do that too. If you play their game, you lose. Remember that there's a grain of truth or some other strong motive for the attack. An outraged and categorical denial of the problem won't lend credibility to your position.

3. Don't under-prepare. That's what was meant by research.

4. Maintain perspective. Again, don't do what the attacker usually fails to do.

5. Communicate selectively. Don't broadside your response to people who aren't aware of the problem and aren't equipped to understand the issues. Don't blow the problem out of proportion. Restrict your attempts to inform, educate, and persuade to people who have the clout to act on the question. These may include the attackers themselves, government officials who may not draft, pass, and enforce restrictive legislation, and

those allied in your cause.

Now we will look at a specific situation: plastics and the solid waste problem.

Plastic bottles, in fact all types of disposable plastic packaging, are under attack for contributing to the solid waste disposal problem.

More specifically, plastic packaging has been singled out as a major cause of the third pollution problem, getting rid of solid wastes. The first and second, of course, are air and water pollution.

Detractors say that plastics don't degrade very quickly, can't be recycled, and contribute both dangerous and nuisance elements to the air when incinerated. Polyvinyl chloride, one of the plastics family, is singled out for special criticism because it is said to create hydrochloric acid and phosgene gas. The final part of the problem was that the plastics industry was saying very little in its own defense.

The need to communicate was obvious. The industry had to respond to the criticism, assume a positive stance, identify with the public interest, and speak with a single voice.

Although our guidelines say communicate selectively, the problem in this case could hardly have been better

publicized, and we thought that all of these groups had a need to know our side of the story: members of the Society of Plastics Industries--our client--their customers, government officials, opinion leaders, news media, antipollution groups, schools, and consumers.

Our objectives were to win public support for plastic packaging, maintain its markets, and head off restrictive legislation.

What could we say? First we thought that the utility of plastics needed to be explained. It is light weight, safe in itself, and protects the things it packages from contamination. As a meat wrapping, for example, it serves the housewife well in letting her see exactly what she is buying. It can be disposed of far easier than glass or metal, by burning and it makes ideal sanitary landfill as compared to paper. But these things don't deal with the problem of air pollution when plastics are incinerated or the longer range question of how best to dispose of plastics.

Our client didn't have all the answers to these questions, but some were in hand and the industry was committed to finding others. The preliminary results of an incinerator research project at New York University indicated no significantly dangerous emissions from burning plastic.

There was, however, an incinerator corrosion problem that was being worked on. The industry also was committed to working with the government to develop better disposal techniques, including ways to recycle plastics. Part of this effort was an extensive information exchange among members of the Society of Plastics Industries and with sanitation experts here and abroad. All of this needed to be communicated.

Putting the plastics disposal problem in perspective was as important as communicating the utility of plastics and the industry commitment. The facts of the matter are that packaging as a whole is only part of the solid waste problem and plastics account for a minor part of all packaging. We said, in effect, yes, disposing of plastics is a problem, but we have to solve the whole problem, not just the relatively minor plastics part.

The polyvinyl chloride part of the problem was a little harder to deal with. PVC does produce hydrochloric acid when burned, and though the amounts are insignificant, the public has every right to be concerned. The facts, however, are that most PVC goes into non-disposable products, and that incinerator technology, especially in Europe has advanced to the point of virtually eliminating the hydrochloric acid problem.

The tools available to communicate these things were personal contact with attackers and government officials, publicity, publications such as position papers, newsletters, and speeches, seminars, exhibits, and advertising.

Our low-key response thus far has consisted of these things and a single advertisement.

We sent out a release based on a speech on PVC that we prepared for delivery at a packaging seminar. We made recommendations on customer direct mail. Next we prepared the copy and layout of the industry position paper for distribution by the Society of Plastics Industries members. The position paper was backed by Plastics and the Environment, a newsletter for the industry. We prepared a speech for delivery by an SPI spokesman to the National Packaging Association. The spokesman's remarks made NBC's "Today" show. An interview later appeared in Food and Drug Packaging.

Another result of our work with the press was a roundtable article in Sales Management and Marketing Magazine, an influential publication with our client's customers.

The battle isn't over yet, but, by and large, we think we've been successful in toning down the voices of criticism and creating an atmosphere of calm in which

the industry, its critics and government can work out reasonable solutions to the problem. Meanwhile, there has been very little restricitve legislation, and markets have been retained.

PUBLIC RELATIONS: WHO NEEDS IT?

The following discussion took place in March 1970 at an evening meeting of the Publicity Club of Boston. The panel was entitled "Public Relations: Who Needs It?" Dr. Otto Lerbinger, chairman of the Public Relations Division, Boston University's School of Public Communication, was the moderator. Panelists were: Eli Goldston, president Eastern Gas & Fuel Associates; Edward V. Hickey, vice-president Public Relations and Advertising, New England Merchants National Bank; and Carroll P. Sheehan, commissioner, Department of Commerce and Development, Commonwealth of Massachusetts. (Ed.).

LERBINGER

We all need public relations. Some of us have public relations to offer and some of us need public relations so badly that we should want it.

Perhaps we should start with the question, "What is it about today's times which makes the need for PR on the corporate and governmental level more important, but, perhaps, different from what it has been in the past? Is this era of student protest beginning to have an impact on those who govern in all organizations? Are they beginning to think of PR as an essential link between the public and those who govern? Do those who are responsible for PR and who use PR people think only in terms of communications? Or do they also think of PR as making a contribution as a kind of political link that unites the electorate, and that unites publics who have grievances with managers?"

We are in a stage in our society where a lot of the basic questions being asked relate directly or indirectly to the role of PR. In short, are there any differences in the kinds of problems PR men must now deal with?

GOLDSTON

The problems public relations practitioners confront today are markedly different than those faced

only ten years ago. Oddly enough, the change came when the Black civil rights movement demonstrated that you can fight City Hall.

It used to be that corporations would pay someone in the Right of Way Department a minimum wage to go around to the housewife and say, "You know, we've decided to run a pipeline through your backyard." And, of course, she would look at our man in terror and say, "Oh, but I don't want my backyard dug up." Our man would then counter, "Look lady, you're going to get five dollars, so sign this right-of-way agreement. What are you going to do? Fight City Hall?" In most cases, the corporations didn't even bother to repair the lawn.

Not so today. Should you ask someone if they intend to fight City Hall, the reply would be, "You're damned right I am." To the embarrassment of many a PR department, they do just that. In the long run it is far better to spend the extra two years and two million dollars if you hope to avoid the wrath of aldermen, mayors, and seething citizens.

In today's climate of social awareness corporations can ill afford promises that exceed a willingness to deliver.

Put simply, people are impatient with self-seeking institutions. On the one hand, the struggle for corporate survival is more competitive than ever; and on the other, consumers are in every way more demanding. The public relations man is caught somewhere in between.

Cost conscious expediency has given way to social pressure and safe, reliable products. First, in our complex industrial society, the PR man must create an environment in which compromise on both the part of the corporations and consumers is obtainable. Institutions provide valuable services, but always at some cost. Rapid transit systems, for instance, receive unanimous approval until the tracks begin to violate the sanctity of private property. Secondly, effective PR men can no longer take the "now you see it, now you don't" approach in a sophisticated society. They must have something to work with: decision making authority and an adequate budget for starters.

The world has sufficiently changed in that people are no longer submissive.

Consumers no longer stand in awe of vast corporate structures. Instantaneous communication and the civil rights movement have schooled America to distinguish fraud from reality. The lesson appears to have been well learned. For too long the "good neighbor Sam" commercials for the local bank have been out of keeping with the ogre running the loan department. The meretricious holds no promise for a strong corporate future. With relationships changing between corporations and consumers, intermediaries serve a function more valuable than ever. But, as responsible intermediaries, public relations men must present the situation as it exists. Increasingly, consumers are choking on the taste of chaff.

HICKEY

When you hear the title "public relations" there are probably as many definitions as there are people in the field. No one really has a patent on the meaning of the term. One thing is certain, however, most companies' public relations are not what they should be.

There probably is not a man in the U.S. who fulfills the job as it will be defined here.

Business today is so competitive that company goals demand the utmost attention and concentration. So much so, that all the talent and vision companies have is used exclusively to advance these goals. Unfortunately, this is often done at the expense of the public interest.

The responsible public relations practitioner should be working in behalf of the consumer in the public interest. As Edward Bernays suggests, there is a vital need in any corporate structure for someone who is sensitive, responsive, interested, and dedicated to something other than the company goal of maximized corporate earnings. Few public relations men in the business world have had the opportunity to be such a person.

Corporate indifference to the consumer is no longer possible. This is true if we intend to survive. For too long businessmen have acted as though the free enterprise system was granted by divine right. It was not, and, bit by bit, that system is being taken away. Mostly this slow demise is the result of corporate indifference to the public trust.

Under the circumstances, it is amazing to find big business without a representative who is committed in large part to the public interest. Since this speech, some companies like Ford, Chrysler, and Traveler's Insurance Company have made a start. This is the role the public relations profession should assume, but, to this date, has not.

The question is not "Public Relations: Who Needs It?" Every corporation has public relations of one kind or another. But just like your breath, you can have good PR or bad PR. A corporation can allow its public relations to fall by the wayside or it can make every effort to act responsibly.

In light of public sentiment today, it is amazing that more companies don't sense "the wave of the future." The alternative to responsiveness to the consumer will be more and more governmental attention through rules and regulations. It will be interesting to see what happens.

SHEEHAN

What is the relationship between government and public relations? After about a year as Commissioner of Commerce and Development for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, I've found that there is too little response on the part of government to the needs of the people. Inflexibility seems to be a hallmark of government.

For example, the Public Works Department thinks once it has built a road, let the individual community take care of it. Unfortunately, the department will sometimes put an exit off an interstate like Route 495 which finds its way into the heart of a small town. After two years, that same small town now has a massive traffic problem. The citizenry has no one to talk to and the state has not done its part in solving the problem.

The issues in government seldom involve questions of "right" and "wrong" for everyone. Our victories are normally pyrrhic. For every two people who are satisfied with a decision, there is someone who is decidedly dissatisfied.

Officials spend their political lives on the horns of a dilemma. It's damned if you do and damned if you don't.

If a small community is in economic difficulty, with several thousand unemployed, it needs revenue. In some cases that revenue can be obtained by diverting traffic from major arteries into the community. This then calls for traffic lights and, more importantly, some flexibility on the part of government. The problem is one of a traffic slow down and safety on major highways, vs. revenue and bread on the table in an economically depressed community. A balance can be struck, but at what cost to the motorist and the community.

In private enterprise, you take the direct route and get the job done. Government simply does not work this way. In achieving any goal, there are innumerable publics which must be satisfied. In a typical program we deal with administration and finance---they control the budget. Then, we have the legislature and the Committee on Ways and Means in both the House and Senate.

The following example may illustrate the complexity of dealing with the various publics in government.

All of the funds allocated to my department come from the motel-hotel tax. Now the problems begin.

Motel and hotel owners think that all of the revenue should go toward promoting tourism. But, at the same time, the state needs to develop its industrial job base which is in critical condition.

The first lesson in dealing with publics is that, invariably, you will not satisfy all of them. The next and final impression is the frustration felt working with the public in the government sector.